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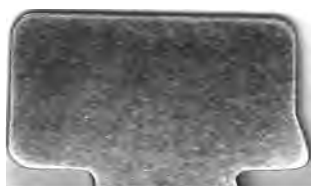
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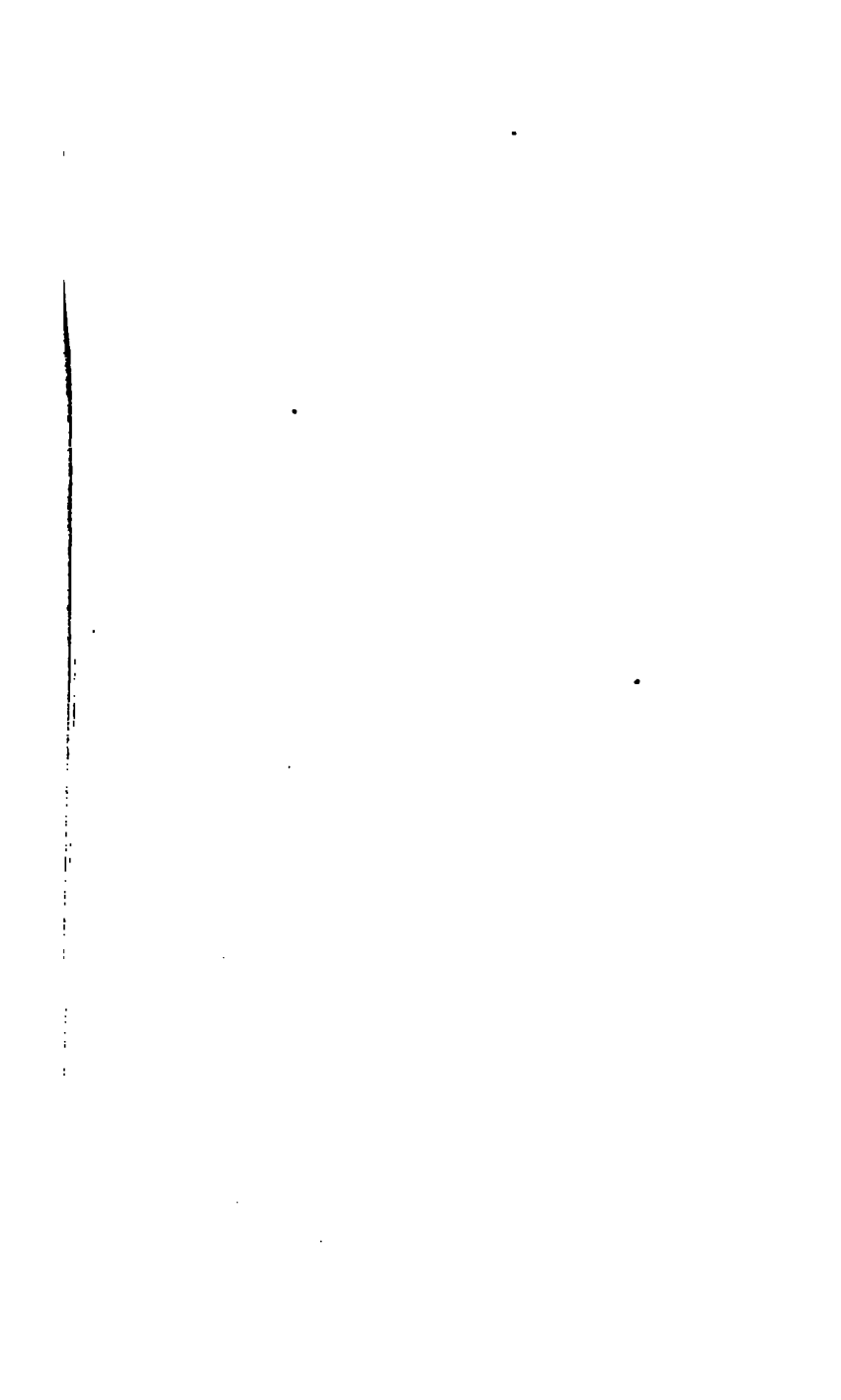
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BUTLER'S
SIX SERMONS
BY DR. WHEWELL.

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BUTLER'S
SIX SERMONS ON MORAL SUBJECTS.

A SEQUEL TO THE
THREE SERMONS ON HUMAN NATURE.

EDITED BY
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WITH A PREFACE
AND A SYLLABUS OF THE WORK.

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EDITOR'S PREFACE.

DR. BUTLER'S Three Sermons *On Human Nature* were recently published separately, as containing the leading points in his view of the moral nature of man; but in truth, no one can have a complete notion of Butler's moral philosophy, without taking into his consideration also the doctrines delivered in his other sermons, especially those concerning *Compassion, Resentment, and the Relation of Benevolence to Self-love*. These are the subjects of the Six Sermons which I now publish, and which are the fifth, sixth, eighth, ninth, eleventh and twelfth, of the *Fifteen Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel*.

The leading aims of these Six Sermons are in a great measure the same with those of the Three Sermons which I have already edited; namely, the establishment of a true view of the nature of man, in opposition to the systems of Hobbes and others, which resolve all man's actions into selfish regards; and

the enforcement of certain duties on the ground of man's nature thus established.

Thus in the beginning of the *Sermon on Compassion*, (Art. 1 of this), we have a note on Hobbes's account of Compassion, which much resembles the note on Hobbes's account of Benevolence, Art. [3] of the *Three Sermons*. And the *Sermon on Benevolence*, (Art. 96 of this,) further develops the doctrine of Articles [5]...[9] of the *Three Sermons*, with regard to the distinction between self-love and other affections. And though he does not say much of *Resentment* in the *Three Sermons*, he mentions (Art. [7] of that volume), indignation against successful vice, as one of the affections which tends to the good of society.

One point in Butler's account of *Resentment* as given in the present volume, has been admired as happy and novel: I mean, the distinction between sudden anger and settled resentment, (Art. 46 of this). The distinction is of this kind: The former does not imply that we have wrong inflicted on us, the latter does. The former flashes up before we have time to reflect, and resists all violence and harm; the

latter glows with a permanent heat against injury and injustice. The former is an instinct, implanted for preservation; the latter is a moral sentiment given for the repression of injustice. The former, we may add, belongs to animals; the latter is peculiar to man. It is not often that a moralist can fasten upon a distinction, so new and yet so true, in the well-gleaned field in which his task lies.

Butler labours very much to give prominence to the distinction between our self-love and our other affections, whether or not they be those which tend directly to our pleasure: as for instance, hunger, revenge, and the love of our neighbours. He remarks—that self-love has an *internal* object, our own happiness; the other affections have *external* objects:—that the pleasures derived from external objects *presuppose* the affections; for we should have no pleasure in food if we had no appetite:—that self-love produces *interested* actions, the affections, if unrestrained, produce *passionate* actions;—that *self-love* presupposes the *desires* by the gratification of which our happiness is promoted;—with other remarks of a like kind. Doubtless these are import-

ant differences between the simple original affections or appetites, and that complex and abstract principle which we especially term *self-love*. But I am not sure that Butler has not drawn this line of distinction stronger than it can easily be kept in men's minds. For since self-love, according to him, is the desire of our own happiness, and since our own happiness consists in the gratification of certain desires of external things, it may come to pass that our original desires are absorbed in and replaced by self-love. Whether the case shall be so or not, appears to depend upon the extent to which our habits of abstraction and generalization have gone. Take, for instance, the love of luxurious fare. This can hardly be said to be simply an original desire. The original desires tend to certain meats and drinks; and it is only when speaking of these in a general and abstract manner that we call them *luxuries*. We might speak of them in a manner more general and abstract still, and might call them *ingredients of happiness*; and our desire for them under this aspect might stand in the place of our desire for luxuries, as our desire for luxuries stands in the place of our desire

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for turtle and champagne. The abstract and general desire not only includes the particular desire, but it may come to replace it and supersede it in the mind, as I have remarked in the *Elements of Morality*, Art. 35. And thus the desire of luxuries would, in the end, not be so much an original desire, distinguishable from self-love, as it would be one of the modes in which self-love acts. Butler, very justly as seems to me, makes self-love consist in *thinking* much about ourselves, with reference to the gratification of our desires. But on this very account, we cannot rigorously put self-love in opposition to other desires; because we cannot oppose a mode of *thinking* to a mode of *desiring*.

That a special desire may come to be identical with self-love, Butler himself appears to teach, when he says (Art. 124 of this), that *covetousness* is commonly not the mere desire of money, but is identical with the general principle of self-love.

The habits of abstraction and generalization by which the desires of external things are absorbed and replaced by the desire of happiness and the thought of our own

happiness, grow by insensible degrees, both in each individual and in generations of men. And therefore it does not appear to be wise to make any large portion of our morality depend upon assuming a fixed standard of the degree of this habit of looking to our own happiness.

A similar remark may be made on the use of the terms *interested* and *disinterested*. Butler urges (Art. 112), that we may not only say that Virtue is disinterested, but also that Hatred and Revenge are so ; because in feeling them, we do not aim at our own interest. But if, when we entertain those feelings, we suppose that we also perform a reflex act of thought by which we imagine *ourselves* as persons who have a pleasure, and therefore an interest, in the gratification of this hatred or revenge, it would seem, on Butler's own view, that then the actions by which we gratify those affections are interested actions.

It is to be observed, however, that these remarks do not disturb Butler's argument ; which is, that the gratification of our benevolent affections is not at all at variance with self-love ; but on the contrary, may be the

very best course that self-love can discover.
(Art. 123, &c.)

Butler's mode of deducing and enforcing the duties which arise from the affections here considered—Compassion, Resentment, and General Benevolence—is one in which he peculiarly delights. He considers *for what end* these springs of action were inserted in our human nature; which “final cause” of our several affections can, he holds, be discovered (Art. 22): and from this final cause, he infers both the true sphere and the proper limits of each affection. This is a mode of teaching our duties which asserts them to be duties because they are acts of conformity to God's will: but it is a peculiar mode of doing this; since in this way of treating morality, we are taught to perform our duties, not in obedience to the special commands of our Divine Governor, but in a spirit of conformity to His general intentions, as shown in the constitution of our nature. In their ultimate ground, the two aspects of duty coincide; but I think it cannot be doubted that to many minds, the consideration of God's workmanship as seen in our souls no less than in our bodies, adds im-

pressiveness to all other reasons for controlling perverted and extravagant affections.

But though the Sermons of Butler now published, along with the previous three, contain many important remarks on certain parts of Moral Philosophy, I by no means offer them to the reader as forming a system of morality. They refer almost entirely to the *Duties of the Affections*; and thus omit in a great measure the other classes of Duties; as, for example, Duties with regard to Property, Truth, Purity, and Order*. And although, as is stated in the last of these Sermons, Benevolence may, in a certain manner, be made to include all Virtues; yet this does not supersede the necessity of establishing other Duties separately in a body of Morality.

The basis of the whole body of sound Morality is laid by Butler in the *Three Sermons*, when he establishes his doctrine of the "supremacy," or rather, as I have remarked in the Preface to those Three Sermons, the *authority* of conscience over those various springs of action, the particular desires and affections which he speaks of in this volume.

* See *Elements of Morality*, B. II.

The Conscience or Moral Reason of all men, when listened to calmly and attentively, pronounces Love of our Neighbours, Veracity, Honesty, Fairness, Conjugal Fidelity, Orderliness, to be virtues; and by a development of this notion of Virtues, we establish Principles of Duty, and Rules of Duty, as I have endeavoured to shew in the *Elements of Morality*.

I hope it may appear to my readers, as it has appeared to me, that Butler's style gains both in clearness and impressiveness by being broken into short paragraphs in the manner in which it is presented in these Nine Sermons. His arguments are abstract, and commonly are briefly and guardedly expressed; so that each argument, conveyed in few and general words, requires to be dwelt upon before its full force is discerned. When we thus weigh Butler's words, we shall, I think, perceive them to be selected with great care and great temper. His indignation against the "licentious talk," as he call it, of his day, sometimes, indeed, gives a slightly ironical turn to his expressions, but this is kept within bounds of great moderation. As when (Art. 118 of this volume) he says, "Suppose a man

with such a *singularity* of mind as to have an affection to the public good ;” and again, after speaking of what pious men would say, “if they might be heard,” as to the satisfactory nature of their own state of mind, he adds, “This looks suspicious of having somewhat in it. Self-love, methinks, should be alarmed. May she not possibly pass over greater pleasures than those she is so wholly taken up with ?”

In the Preface to the Sermons, Butler has recapitulated the arguments of some of them, and especially of the two here given on the Love of our Neighbour. I have already printed the whole Preface in the Edition of the *Three Sermons* ; but I shall here reprint these parts of it, as throwing further light upon the reasoning. I shall also insert the passage from Hobbes, to which he especially refers in the Sermon on Compassion.

TRINITY LODGE,

March 10, 1849.

CONTENTS.

PREFATORY NOTE TO SERMON I.	- - -	p. xx
EXTRACTS FROM THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE	-	xxi

SERMONS.

I. OF COMPASSION AS A PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN NATURE.

1. Compassion, as a social principle, is conceivable.

Note on Hobbes's doctrine.

(a) He holds that compassion is a care for ourselves.

(b) This is not what is meant by compassion.

(c) If it were, fear and compassion would be the same.

(d) Compassion is approved, fear is not.

(e) Hobbes's definition cannot be used ;

(f) Would not explain why we most pity our friends ;

(g) Substitutes a different fact.

(h) An accidental sound might produce pity in Hobbes's sense.

(i) Pity and fear are both felt.

(k) Hobbes's view, so far as true, is a proof of sympathy.

2. Compassion is an original affection.

3. Reason why we have this affection.

4. Is it a weakness ?

5. It is necessary.

6. Is no more a weakness than our senses are.

7. Both belong to our nature.

8. Affection is a supplement to reason.

9. *First.* Sympathy increases happiness.

10. Compassion is necessary to sympathy.
11. Compassion produces pleasure.
12. Compassion includes a feeling of satisfaction.
13. The unfeeling are insensible to many pleasures.
14. *Secondly.* Without affections men would not do their duties.
15. Compassion gives the indigent access to us.
16. Unfeeling men are restrained by the compassion of others.
17. Apathy is a moral disease.
18. Hardness of heart in men of pleasure.
19. Our Saviour was compassionate.
20. Sympathy with sorrow more common than with joy.
21. Danger of over-refinement.

II. OF THE RIGHT USE OF COMPASSION.

22. Final cause is discoverable in the affections.
23. We can occasion misery more than happiness.
24. Hence compassion is necessary
25. Its final cause
26. To prevent misery.
27. Time relieves grief.
28. Compassion tends to relieve misery ;
29. Is a call of nature.
30. Compassion and liberality.
31. Course directed by compassion.
32. Compassion better than liberality.
33. Does more good.
34. Proportion of good.
35. Pity mixed with other affections.
36. Compassion may be excessive.
37. But fashion favours insensibility.
38. Error of pursuing pleasure.
39. Use of the house of mourning.
40. We should be content with moderate joy.

41. Soberness of mind.
42. Earth not our home.

+

III. OF THE USES AND ABUSES OF RESENTMENT.

43. Correspondence of our nature and our circumstances to be considered.
44. Error as to the office of Resentment.
45. What is the office ?
46. Sudden anger and settled resentment.
47. Sudden anger does not imply wrong received.
48. Its office is to resist sudden force.
49. Deliberate resentment implies wrong received.
50. Indignation is not malice.
51. Is stronger when we ourselves are concerned.
52. This is the whole passion.
53. Its object is injury,
54. As appears by the aggravations.
55. Degrees of the affection.
56. Final cause of Resentment.
57. Recapitulation.
58. Such is the natural affection.
59. Abuses of Anger : Passion.
60. Peevishness.
61. Abuses of Resentment.
62. Obstinate bad temper.
63. Indignation is a balance to compassion.
64. For example, in punishing crime.
65. Advantage of this.
66. Indignation proves the reality of virtue.
67. And the wisdom of God.

IV. OF THE DUTY OF FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

68. Use of the affections in general.
69. Forgiveness of injuries does not forbid resentment, but the excess of it.

70. Unlawfulness of revenge.
71. *First.* Anger produces anger.
72. Hence revenge would produce malice,
73. And without limit.
74. *Second.* Resentment is a painful remedy.
75. The argument does not depend on the image ;
76. Mankind being really a community.
77. Resentment different from other passions :
78. In its tendency to produce misery.
79. This agrees with previous views.
80. Hence love of enemies.
81. Resentment is consistent with good-will.
82. Vice does not destroy good-will:
83. However great the vice :
84. Nor if we ourselves are the sufferers by it.
85. Self-partiality alone denies this.
86. To love enemies is not *rant*.
87. We are to be impartial.
88. This is reasonable.
89. Practical reflections.
90. We always exaggerate injuries.
91. Anger is a false medium.
92. Common sense suggests this.
93. The origin of wrong is not malice.
94. Vice is the object of compassion.
95. We should recollect that we need forgiveness from
God.

V. OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR AS RELATED TO
SELF-LOVE.

96. Whether narrow affections may not contradict private good.
97. Whether benevolence be opposed to self-love.
98. The nature of self-love to be considered.

99. Self-love has an internal, other affections have external objects.
100. Pleasures from external objects pre-suppose appetites to them.
101. Are affections self-love because they belong to ourselves ?
102. This would confound all differences.
103. Self-love produces interested, affection, passionate actions.
104. Happiness does not consist in self-love.
105. Self-love may fail to promote our good.
106. Self-love may produce solicitude.
107. Excessive self-love may produce misery.
108. Is benevolence opposed to self-love ?
109. Benevolence distinct, but not therefore opposed.
110. Self-love does not exclude other affections.
111. Benevolence does not exclude self-love.
112. Hatred, as well as love, may be disinterested.
113. Ambition, &c. may be disinterested.
114. This a question of words.
115. Are benevolence and self-love opposite in their course of action ?
116. Affections may tend both to our own happiness, and to that of another.
117. Their regard to their objects does not disturb their regard to private good.
118. Benevolence produces enjoyment as much as ambition.
119. And produces a happy temper.
120. Benevolence is something added to common pleasures.
121. Reverence for God produces a satisfaction.
122. Hence Virtue may be the best course of self-love.
123. Thus Benevolence is a means of private good.
124. Covetousness is not commonly a special affection.

- 125. All affections may interfere with self-love.
- 126. Benevolence interferes little.
- 127. The common confusion of property and happiness
- 128. Is an error.
- 129. Religion sanctions self-love.
- 130. We have tried to gain favour for benevolence.
- 131. Christianity enjoins charity.

VI. OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR AS INCLUDING ALL OTHER VIRTUES.

- 132. Subject of discourse.
- 133. I. Goodness consists in love.
- 134. Why the love *of our neighbour*.
- 135. II. In what sense, *as ourselves*?
- 136. *First*. The love of our neighbour to be *of the same kind* as love of ourselves.
- 137. This is a right *temper*.
- 138. *Secondly*. The Love of our neighbour to bear a *proportion* to self-love.
- 139. Proportion of affections to be considered.
- 140. A balance of benevolence and self-love
- 141. Is implied in the precept.
- 142. The course of action to be considered.
- 143. Our provision for ourselves to be limited.
- 144. *Thirdly*. If the love of our neighbour be *equal* to self-love, what are the consequences?
- 145. There are many affections which we *cannot* feel for others.
- 146. We are *intrusted* with ourselves.
- 147. We have a *constant perception* of our own interests.
- 148. Hence we should not neglect ourselves, even on this supposition.
- 149. III. Benevolence produces charity.
- 150. Operation of this temper.
- 151. It moderates party-spirit.

- 152. Prevents strife.
 - 153. IV. Charity includes all virtues.
 - 154. (Reason is supposed to operate).
 - 155. *First.* Charity promotes the happiness of others.
 - 156. Makes us attend to our social relations.
 - 157. Regard to others may produce temperance, &c.
 - 158. Hence all virtue may be traced to benevolence.
 - Note on the nature of Virtue.
 - (a) It may be our duty to regard other ends as well as producing happiness.
 - (b) We disapprove certain dispositions without regard to consequences.
 - (c) And others we approve,
 - (d) In another view than as conducive to happiness.
 - 159. *Secondly.* Benevolence includes all that is good.
 - 160. Piety is the love of God's goodness.
 - Prayer.
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PREFATORY NOTE TO SERMON I.

THE *first* Sermon in this Collection (the sixth in the original edition) is upon *Compassion, as a Principle of Human Nature*, and is introductory to the following one, *On the Right Use of Compassion*. Some writers a little before the Author's time, and especially Hobbes, had held that a regard for others was conceivable only as a reflected regard for ourselves, and had applied this view to Compassion, among other affections. The assertions employed for this purpose, Butler refutes in a note on Art. 1 of the Sermon, and his reasoning will be more intelligible, if I here insert Hobbes's account of Compassion. (*Human Nature*, Chap. ix.)

“Pity is Imagination or Fiction of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the sense of another man's calamity. But when it lighteth on such as we think have not deserved the same, the compassion is greater, because then there appeareth more probability that the same may happen to us: for, the evil that happeneth to an innocent man, may happen to every man. But when we see a man suffer for great crimes, which we cannot easily think will fall upon ourselves, the pity is the less. And therefore men are apt to pity those whom they love: for, whom they love, they think worthy of good, and therefore not worthy of calamity. Thence it is also, that men pity the vices of some persons at the first sight only, out of love to their aspect. The contrary of pity is hardness of heart, proceeding either from slowness of imagination, or some extreme great opinion of their own exemption from the like calamity, or from hatred of all or most men.”

EXTRACTS FROM THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE account given of *Resentment*, in the eighth [third] sermon, is introductory to the following one, *Upon Forgiveness of Injuries*. It may possibly have appeared to some, at first sight, a strange assertion, that injury is the only natural object of settled resentment; or that men do not, in fact, resent deliberately anything but under this appearance of injury. But I must desire the reader not to take any assertion alone by itself, but to consider the whole of what is said upon it: because this is necessary, not only in order to judge of the truth of it, but often, such is the nature of language, to see the very meaning of the assertion. Particularly as to this, injury and injustice is, in the sermon itself, explained to mean, not only the more gross and shocking instances of wickedness, but also contempt, scorn, neglect, any sort of disagreeable behaviour towards a person, which he thinks other than what is due to him. And the general notion of injury, or wrong, plainly comprehends this, though the words are mostly confined to the higher degrees of it.

Forgiveness of injuries [see the fourth Sermon] is one of the very few moral obligations which has been disputed. But the proof that it is really an obligation, what our nature and condition require, seems very obvious, were it only from the consideration, that revenge is doing harm merely for harm's sake. And as to the love of our enemies: resentment cannot supersede the obligations to universal benevolence, unless they are in the nature of the thing inconsistent, which they plainly are not.

This divine precept, to forgive injuries and love our

enemies, though to be met with in Gentile moralists, yet is in a peculiar sense a precept of Christianity; as our Saviour has insisted more upon it than upon any other single virtue. One reason of this doubtless is, that it so peculiarly becomes an imperfect faulty creature. But it may be observed also, that a virtuous temper of mind, consciousness of innocence, and good meaning towards everybody, and a strong feeling of injustice and injury, may, itself, such is the imperfection of our virtue, lead a person to violate this obligation, if he be not upon his guard. And it may be well supposed, that this is another reason why it is so much insisted upon by him, who *knew what was in man*.

The chief design of the eleventh [*fifth*] discourse, is to state the notion of self-love and disinterestedness, in order to show that benevolence is not more unfriendly to self-love than any other particular affection whatever. There is a strange affectation in many people in explaining away all particular affections, and representing the whole of life as nothing but one continued exercise of self-love. Hence arises that surprizing confusion and perplexity in the Epicureans* of old, Hobbes, the author

* One need only look into Torquatus's account of the Epicurean system in Cicero's first book *De Finibus*, to see in what a surprising manner this was done by them. Thus, the desire of praise, and of being beloved, he explains to be no other than desire of safety: regard to our country, even in the most virtuous character, to be nothing but regard to ourselves. The author of *Reflections, &c. Morales*, says, "Curiosity proceeds from interest, or pride;" which pride also would doubtless have been explained to be self-love; (Page 85, Ed. 1725)—as if there were no passions in mankind, as desire of esteem, or of being beloved, or of knowledge. Hobbes's account of the affections of good will and pity, are instances of the same kind.

of *Reflections, Sentences, et Maximes Morales*, and this whole set of writers; the confusion of calling actions interested, which are done in contradiction to the most manifest known interest, merely for the gratification of a present passion. Now, all this confusion might easily be avoided, by stating to ourselves wherein the idea of self-love in general consists, as distinguished from all particular movements towards particular external objects; the appetites of sense, resentment, compassion, curiosity, ambition, and the rest. When this is done, if the words *selfish* and *interested* cannot be parted with, but must be applied to everything; yet, to avoid such total confusion of all language, let the distinction be made by epithets; and the first may be called *cool*, or *settled* selfishness, and the other *passionate* or *sensual* selfishness. But the most natural way of speaking plainly is, to call the first only, *self-love*, and the actions proceeding from it *interested*; and to say of the latter, that they are not love to ourselves, but movements towards somewhat *external*,—honour, power, the harm or good of another. And that the pursuit of these external objects, so far as it proceeds from these movements, (for it may proceed from self-love,) is no otherwise interested, than as every action of every creature must, from the nature of the thing, be; for no one can act but from a desire, or choice, or preference of his own.

Self-love and any particular passion may be joined together; and from this complication, it becomes impossible, in numberless instances, to determine precisely how far an action, perhaps even of one's own, has for its principle general self-love or some particular passion. But this need create no confusion in the ideas themselves

of self-love and particular passions. We distinctly discern what one is, and what the other are; though we may be uncertain how far one or the other influences us. And though, from this uncertainty, it cannot but be, that there will be different opinions concerning mankind, as more or less governed by interest; and some will ascribe actions to self-love, which others will ascribe to particular passions, yet it is absurd to say, that mankind are wholly actuated by either; since it is manifest that both have their influence. For as, on the one hand, men form a general notion of interest, some placing it in one thing, and some in another, and have a considerable regard to it throughout the course of their life, which is owing to self-love; so, on the other hand, they are often set on work by the particular passions themselves, and a considerable part of life is spent in the actual gratification of them; *i. e.* is employed, not by self-love, but by the passions.

Besides, the very idea of an interested pursuit necessarily presupposes particular passions or appetites; since the very idea of interest, or happiness, consists in this, that an appetite, or affection, enjoys its object. It is not because we love ourselves that we find delight in such and such objects, but because we have particular affections towards them. Take away these affections, and you leave self-love absolutely nothing at all to employ itself about; no end, or object, for it to pursue, excepting only that of avoiding pain. Indeed, the Epicureans, who maintained that absence of pain was the highest happiness, might, consistently with themselves, deny all affection, and, if they had so pleased, every sensual appetite too: but the very idea of interest, or happiness,

other than absence of pain, implies particular appetites or passions; these being necessary to constitute that interest or happiness.

The observation, that benevolence is no more disinterested than any of the common particular passions, seems in itself worth being taken notice of; but is insisted upon to obviate that scorn, which one sees rising upon the faces of people, who are said to know the world, when mention is made of a disinterested, generous, or public-spirited action. The truth of that observation might be made appear in a more formal manner of proof: for whoever will consider all the possible respects and relations which any particular affection can have to self-love and private interest, will, I think, see demonstrably, that benevolence is not in any respect more at variance with self-love, than any other particular affection whatever, but that it is, in every respect, at least as friendly to it.

If the observation be true, it follows, that self-love and benevolence, virtue and interest, are not to be opposed, but only to be distinguished from each other; in the same way as virtue and any other particular affection, love of arts, suppose, are to be distinguished. Everything is what it is, and not another thing. The goodness, or badness of actions, does not arise from hence, that the epithet, *interested*, or *disinterested*, may be applied to them, any more than that any other indifferent epithet, suppose *inquisitive* or *jealous*, may, or may not, be applied to them; not from their being attended with present or future pleasure or pain, but from their being what they are: namely, what becomes such creatures as we are, what the state of the case.

requires, or the contrary. Or, in other words, we may judge and determine that an action is morally good or evil, before we so much as consider whether it be interested or disinterested. This consideration no more comes in to determine, whether an action be virtuous, than to determine whether it be resentful. Self-love, in its due degree, is as just and morally good as any affection whatever. Benevolence towards particular persons may be to a degree of weakness, and so be blameable. And disinterestedness is so far from being in itself commendable, that the utmost possible depravity, which we can in imagination conceive, is that of disinterested cruelty.

Neither does there appear any reason to wish self-love were weaker in the generality of the world than it is.—The influence which it has, seems plainly owing to its being constant and habitual, which it cannot but be, and not to the degree or strength of it. Every caprice of the imagination, every curiosity of the understanding, every affection of the heart, is perpetually showing its weakness, by prevailing over it. Men daily, hourly, sacrifice the greatest known interest to fancy, inquisitiveness, love or hatred, any vagrant inclination. The thing to be lamented is, not that men have so great regard to their own good or interest in the present world, for they have not enough; but that they have so little to the good of others. And this seems plainly owing to their being so much engaged in the gratification of particular passions unfriendly to benevolence, and which happen to be most prevalent in them, much more than to self-love. As a proof of this it may be observed, that there is no character more void of friendship, gratitude, natural affection, love to their country, common

justice, or more equally and uniformly hard-hearted, than the *abandoned* in, what is called, the way of pleasure—hard-hearted and totally without feeling in behalf of others; except when they cannot escape the sight of distress, and so are interrupted by it in their pleasures. And yet it is ridiculous to call such an abandoned course of pleasure *interested*, when the person engaged in it knows beforehand, and goes on under the feeling and apprehension, that it will be as ruinous to himself, as to those who depend upon him.

Upon the whole, if the generality of mankind were to cultivate within themselves the principle of self-love; if they were to accustom themselves often to set down and consider, what was the greatest happiness they were capable of attaining for themselves in this life; and if self-love were so strong and prevalent, as that they would uniformly pursue this their supposed chief temporal good, without being diverted from it by any particular passion, it would manifestly prevent numberless follies and vices. This was in a great measure the *Epicurean* system of philosophy. It is indeed by no means the religious, or even moral institution of life. Yet with all the mistakes men would fall into about interest, it would be less mischievous than the extravagances of mere appetite, will, and pleasure: for certainly self-love, though confined to the interest of this life, is, of the two, a much better guide than passion, which has absolutely no bound nor measure, but what is set to it by this self-love, or moral considerations.

From the distinction above made, between self-love and the several particular principles or affections in our nature, we may see how good ground there was for that

xxviii EXTRACTS FROM THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

assertion, maintained by the several ancient *Schools* of philosophy against the *Epicureans*, namely, that Virtue is to be pursued as an end, eligible in and for itself. For, if there be any principles or affections in the mind of man distinct from self-love, that the things those principles tend towards, or that the objects of those affections are, each of them, in themselves eligible to be pursued upon its own account, and to be rested in as an end, is implied in the very idea of such principle or affection. They indeed asserted much higher things of Virtue, and with very good reason: but to say thus much of it, that it is to be pursued for itself, is to say no more of it than may truly be said of the object of every natural affection whatever.

I.

[OF COMPASSION AS A PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN NATURE *.]

ROMANS XII. 15.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

[1] EVERY man is to be considered in two capacities, the private and public; as designed to pursue his own interest, and likewise to contribute to the good of others. Whoever will consider may see, that in general there is no contrariety between these; but that, from the original constitution of man, and the circumstances he is placed in, they perfectly coincide, and mutually carry on each other. But amongst the great variety of affections or principles of action in our nature, some in their primary intention and design seem to belong to the simple or private, others to the public or social capacity. The affections required in the text are of the latter sort. When we rejoice in the prosperity of others, and compassionate their distresses, we, as it were, substitute them for ourselves, their interest for our own; and

* Sermon V.

have the same kind of pleasure in their prosperity, and sorrow in their distress, as we have from reflection upon our own. Now, there is nothing strange, or unaccountable in our being thus carried out and affected towards the interests of others. For if there be any appetite, or any inward principle besides self-love, why may there not be an affection to the good of our fellow-creatures, and delight from that affection being gratified, and uneasiness from things going contrary to it*?

* (a) There being manifestly this appearance of men's substituting others for themselves, and being carried out and affected towards them as towards themselves; some persons, who have a system which excludes every affection of this sort, have taken a pleasant method to solve it, and tell you, it is *not another* you are at all concerned about, but your *self only*, when you feel the affection called compassion: i. e. here is a plain matter of fact which men cannot reconcile with the general account they think fit to give of things; they, therefore, instead of *that* manifest fact, substitute *another*, which is reconcilable to their own scheme.

(b) For, does not every body by *compassion* mean, an affection, the object of which is another in distress? Instead of this, but designing to have it mistaken for this, they speak of an affection, or passion, the object of which is ourselves, or danger to ourselves. Hobbes defines *pity, imagination, or fiction, of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the sense* (he means sight or knowledge) *of another man's calamity*.

(c) Thus, fear and compassion would be the same idea, and a fearful and a compassionate man the same character; which every one immediately sees are totally different.

(d) Further, to those who give any scope to their affections, there is no perception or inward feeling more universal than this: that one who has been merciful and compassionate throughout the course of his behaviour, should himself be treated with kindness, if he happens to fall into circum-

[2] Of these two, delight in the prosperity of others, and compassion for their distresses,

stances of distress. Is fear, then, or cowardice, so great a recommendation to the favour of the bulk of mankind? Or, is it not plain, that mere fearlessness (and, therefore, not the contrary,) is one of the most proper qualifications? This shows that mankind are not affected towards compassion as fear, but as somewhat totally different.

(e) Nothing would more expose such accounts as these of the affections which are favourable and friendly to our fellow-creatures, than to substitute the definitions which this author, and others who follow his steps, give of such affections, instead of the words by which they are commonly expressed. Hobbes, after having laid down that pity, or compassion, is only fear for ourselves, goes on to explain the reason why we pity our friends in distress more than others. Now, substitute the *definition* instead of the word *pity* in this place, and the inquiry will be, why we fear our friends? &c., which words (since he really does not mean why we are afraid of them) make no question or sentence at all. So that common language, the words to *compassionate*, to *pity*, cannot be accommodated to his account of compassion. The very joining of the words to *pity our friends*, is a direct contradiction to his definition of *pity*: because those words, so joined, necessarily express that our friends are the objects of the passion; whereas his definition of it asserts, that ourselves (or danger to ourselves) are the only objects of it.

(f) He might, indeed, have avoided this absurdity, by plainly saying what he is going to account for; namely, why the sight of the innocent, or of our friends in distress, raises greater fears for ourselves than the sight of other persons in distress. But had he put the thing thus plainly, the fact itself would have been doubted, that *the sight of our friends in distress raises in us greater fear for ourselves, than the sight of others in distress*.

(g) And, in the next place, it would immediately have occurred to every one, that the fact now mentioned, which at least is *doubtful*, whether true or false, was not the same with this fact, which nobody ever doubted, that *the sight of our friends in distress raises in us greater compassion than the sight of others in distress*: every one, I say, would have seen

the last is felt much more generally than the former. Though men do not universally

that these are not the *same*, but *two different* inquiries ; and consequently, that fear and compassion are not the same.

(*h*) Suppose a person to be in real danger, and by some means or other to have forgotten it, any trifling accident, any sound might alarm him, recall the danger to his remembrance, and renew his fear : but it is almost too grossly ridiculous (though it is to show an absurdity) to speak of that sound, or accident, as an object of compassion ; and yet according to Mr. Hobbes, our greatest friend in distress is no more to us, no more the object of compassion, or of any affection in our heart. Neither the one nor the other raises any emotion in our mind, but only the thoughts of our liability to calamity, and the fear of it ; and both equally do this.

It is right such sorts of accounts of human nature should be shown to be what they really are, because there is raised upon them a general scheme, which undermines the whole foundation of common justice and honesty.—See HOBBS, *Of Hum. Nat.* c. ix. sec. 10.

(*i*) There are often three different perceptions, or inward feelings, upon sight of persons in distress : real sorrow and concern for the misery of our fellow-creatures ; some degree of satisfaction, from a consciousness of our freedom from that misery ; and as the mind passes on from one thing to another, it is not unnatural, from such an occasion, to reflect upon our own liability to the same or other calamities. The two last frequently accompany the first, but it is the first *only* which is properly compassion, of which the distressed are the objects, and which directly carries us with calmness and thought to their assistance. Any one of these, from various and complicated reasons, may, in particular cases, prevail over the other two ; and there are, I suppose, instances where the bare *sight* of distress, without our feeling any compassion for it, may be the occasion of either or both of the two latter perceptions.

(*k*) One might add, that if there be really any such thing as the fiction or imagination of danger to ourselves, from sight of the miseries of others, which Hobbes speaks of, and which he has absurdly mistaken for the whole of compassion ; if there be anything of this sort common to mankind, distinct from the reflection of reason, it would be a

rejoice with all whom they see rejoice, yet, accidental obstacles removed, they naturally compassionate all in some degree whom they see in distress: so far as they have any real perception or sense of that distress: inso-much that words expressing this latter, *pity*, *compassion*, frequently occur, whereas we have scarce any single one by which the former is distinctly expressed. *Congratulation*, indeed, answers *condolence*: but both these words are intended to signify certain forms of civility, rather than any inward sensation or feeling. This difference or inequality is so remarkable, that we plainly consider compassion as itself an original, distinct, particular affection in human nature; whereas to rejoice in the good of others, is only a consequence of the general affection of love and good will to them.

[3] The reason and account of which matter is this: when a man has obtained any particular advantage or felicity, his end is gained, and he does not in that particular

most remarkable instance of what was furthest from his thoughts, namely, of a mutual sympathy between each particular of the species, a fellow-feeling common to mankind. It would not, indeed, be an example of our substituting others for ourselves, but it would be an example of our substituting ourselves for others. And as it would not be an instance of benevolence, so neither would it be any instance of self-love; for this phantom of danger to ourselves, naturally rising to view upon sight of the distresses of others, would be no more an instance of love to ourselves, than the pain of hunger is.

want the assistance of another; there was, therefore, no need of a distinct affection towards that felicity of another already obtained; neither would such affection directly carry him on to do good to that person: whereas, men in distress want assistance, and compassion leads us directly to assist them. The object of the former is the present felicity of another; the object of the latter is the present misery of another. It is easy to see that the latter wants a particular affection for its relief, and that the former does not want one, because it does not want assistance. And, upon supposition of a distinct affection in both cases, the one must rest in the exercise of itself, having nothing further to gain; the other does not rest in itself, but carries us on to assist the distressed.

[4] But, supposing these affections natural to the mind, particularly the last, "Has not each man troubles enough of his own? must he indulge an affection which appropriates to himself those of others? which leads him to contract the least desirable of all friendships—friendships with the unfortunate? must we invert the known rule of prudence, and choose to associate ourselves with the distressed? Or, allow that we ought, so far as it is in our power, to relieve them, yet is it not better to do this from reason and duty?

Does not passion and affection of every kind perpetually mislead us? Nay, is not passion and affection itself a weakness, and what a perfect being must be entirely free from?"

[5] Perhaps so: but it is mankind I am speaking of; imperfect creatures, and who naturally, and from the condition we are placed in, necessarily depend upon each other. With respect to such creatures, it would be found of as bad consequence to eradicate all natural affections, as to be entirely governed by them. This would almost sink us to the condition of brutes; and that would leave us without a sufficient principle of action. Reason alone, whatever any one may wish, is not, in reality, a sufficient motive of virtue in such a creature as man; but this reason, joined with those affections which God has impressed on his heart: and when these are allowed scope to exercise themselves, but under strict government and direction of reason, then it is we act suitably to our nature, and to the circumstances God has placed us in.

[6] Neither is affection itself at all a weakness; nor does it argue defect, any otherwise than as our senses and appetites do; they belong to our condition of nature, and are what we cannot be without. God Almighty is, to be sure, unmoved by passion or appetite—unchanged by affection; but then it is to

be added, that he neither sees, nor hears, nor perceives things by any senses like ours; but in a manner infinitely more perfect. Now, as it is an absurdity almost too gross to be mentioned, for a man to endeavour to get rid of his senses, because the Supreme Being discerns things more perfectly without them, it is as real, though not so obvious an absurdity, to endeavour to eradicate the passions he has given us, because he is without them.

[7] For, since our passions are as really a part of our constitution as our senses—since the former as really belong to our condition of nature as the latter—to get rid of either is equally a violation of, and breaking in upon, that nature and constitution he has given us. Both our senses and our passions are a supply to the imperfection of our nature: thus they show, that we are such sort of creatures, as to stand in need of those helps which higher orders of creatures do not. But it is not the supply, but the deficiency; as it is not a remedy, but a disease, which is the imperfection. However, our appetites, passions, senses, no way imply disease; nor, indeed, do they imply deficiency or imperfection of any sort; but only this, that the constitution of nature, according to which God has made us, is such as to require them.

[8] And it is so far from being true, that

a wise man must entirely suppress compassion, and all fellow-feeling for others, as a weakness, and trust to reason alone to teach and enforce upon him the practice of the several charities we owe to our kind; that, on the contrary, even the bare exercise of such affections would itself be for the good and happiness of the world; and the imperfections of the higher principles of reason and religion in man, the little influence they have upon our practice, and the strength and prevalency of contrary ones, plainly require those affections to be a restraint upon these latter, and a supply to the deficiencies of the former.

[9] *First*, The very exercise itself of these affections, in a just and reasonable manner and degree, would, upon the whole, increase the satisfactions, and lessen the miseries of life.

It is the tendency and business of virtue and religion to procure, as much as may be, universal good-will, trust, and friendship, amongst mankind. If this could be brought to obtain; and each man enjoyed the happiness of others, as every one does that of a friend; and looked upon the success and prosperity of his neighbour, as every one does upon that of his children and family; it is too manifest to be insisted upon, how much the enjoyments of life would be increased. There


would be so much happiness introduced into the world, without any deduction or inconvenience from it, in proportion as the precept of *rejoice with those who rejoice*, was universally obeyed. Our Saviour has owned this good affection as belonging to our nature, in the parable of the *lost sheep*: and does not think it to the disadvantage of a perfect state, to represent its happiness as capable of increase, from reflection upon that of others.

[10] But since, in such a creature as man, compassion, or sorrow for the distress of others, seems so far necessarily connected with joy in their prosperity, as that whoever rejoices in one must unavoidably compassionate the other: there cannot be that delight or satisfaction, which appears to be so considerable, without the inconveniences, whatever they are, of compassion.

[11] However, without considering this connexion, there is no doubt but that more good than evil, more delight than sorrow, arises from compassion itself: there being so many things which balance the sorrow of it. There is, first, the relief which the distressed feel from this affection in others towards them. There is likewise the additional misery which they would feel from the reflection that no one commiserated their case. It is indeed true, that any disposition, prevailing beyond a

certain degree, becomes somewhat wrong ; and we have ways of speaking, which, though they do not directly express that excess, yet always lead our thoughts to it, and give us the notion of it. Thus, when mention is made of delight in being pitied, this always conveys to our mind the notion of somewhat which is really a weakness ; the manner of speaking, I say implies a certain weakness and feebleness of mind, which is and ought to be disapproved. But men of the greatest fortitude would in distress feel uneasiness from knowing that no person in the world had any sort of compassion or real concern for them ; and in some cases, especially when the temper is enfeebled by sickness, or any long and great distress, doubtless would feel a kind of relief even from the helpless good-will and ineffectual assistances of those about them.

[12] Over against the sorrow of compassion is likewise to be set a peculiar calm kind of satisfaction, which accompanies it, unless in cases where the distress of another is by some means so brought home to ourselves, as to become in a manner our own ; or when, from weakness of mind, the affection rises too high, which ought to be corrected. This tranquillity, or calm satisfaction, proceeds partly from consciousness of a right affection and temper of mind, and partly from a sense of our own freedom from the misery we compassionate.



This last may possibly appear to some at first sight faulty; but it really is not so. It is the same with that positive enjoyment, which sudden ease from pain for the present affords, arising from a real sense of misery, joined with a sense of our freedom from it; which in all cases must afford some degree of satisfaction.


[13] To these things must be added the observation, which respects both the affections we are considering, that they who have got over all fellow-feeling for others, have withal contracted a certain callousness of heart, which renders them insensible to most other satisfactions, but those of the grossest kind.

[14] *Secondly*, Without the exercise of these affections, men would certainly be much more wanting in the offices of charity they owe to each other, and likewise more cruel and injurious, than they are at present.

The private interest of the individual would not be sufficiently provided for by reasonable and cool self-love alone: therefore the appetites and passions are placed within, as a guard and further security, without which it would not be taken due care of. It is manifest our life would be neglected, were it not for the calls of hunger, and thirst, and weariness: notwithstanding that without them reason would assure us, that the recruits of food and sleep are the necessary means of our pre-

servation. It is therefore absurd to imagine that, without affection, the same reason alone would be more effectual to engage us to perform the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures. One of this make would be as defective, as much wanting, considered with respect to society, as one of the former make would be defective, or wanting, considered as an individual, or in his private capacity. Is it possible any can in earnest think that a public spirit, *i. e.* a settled reasonable principle of benevolence to mankind, is so prevalent and strong in the species, as that we may venture to throw off the under affections, which are its assistants, carry it forward, and mark out particular courses for it; family, friends, neighbourhood, the distressed, our country? The common joys and the common sorrows which belong to these relations and circumstances are as plainly useful to society, as the pain and pleasure belonging to hunger, thirst, and weariness, are of service to the individual.

[15] In defect of that higher principle of reason, compassion is often the only way by which the indigent can have access to us; and therefore to eradicate this, though it is not indeed formally to deny them that assistance which is their due; yet it is to cut them off from that which is, too frequently, their only way of obtaining it.



[16] And as for those who have shut up this door against the complaints of the miserable, and conquered this affection in themselves; even these persons will be under great restraints from the same affection in others. Thus, a man who has himself no sense of injustice, cruelty, oppression, will be kept from running the utmost lengths of wickedness, by fear of that detestation, and even resentment of inhumanity, in many particular instances of it, which compassion for the object towards whom such inhumanity is exercised excites in the bulk of mankind. And this is frequently the chief danger, and the chief restraint, which tyrants and the great oppressors of the world feel.

[17] In general, experience will show, that, as want of natural appetite to food supposes and proceeds from some bodily disease, so the apathy the Stoics talk of as much supposes, or is accompanied with, somewhat amiss in the moral character, in that which, is the health of the mind. Those who formerly aimed at this upon the foot of philosophy, appear to have had better success in eradicating the affections of tenderness and compassion, than they had with the passions of envy, pride, and resentment; these latter, at best, were but concealed, and that imperfectly too. How far this observation may be extended to such

as endeavour to suppress the natural impulses of their affections in order to form themselves for business and the world, I shall not determine. But there does not appear any capacity or relation to be named, in which men ought to be entirely deaf to the calls of affection, unless the judicial one is to be excepted.

[18] And as to those who are commonly called the men of pleasure, it is manifest that the reason they set up for hardness of heart, is to avoid being interrupted in their course, by the ruin and misery they are the authors of: neither are persons of this character always the most free from the impotencies of envy and resentment. What may men at last bring themselves to, by suppressing their passions and affections of one kind, and leaving those of the other in their full strength? But surely it might be expected, that persons who make pleasure their study and their business, if they understood what they profess, would reflect, how many of the entertainments of life, how many of those kind of amusements which seem peculiarly to belong to men of leisure and education, they become insensible to by this acquired hardness of heart.

[19] I shall close these reflections with barely mentioning the behaviour of that Divine Person, who was the example of all perfection in human nature, as represented in the

Gospels, mourning, and even, in a literal sense, weeping over the distresses of his creatures.

[20] The observation already made, that, of the two affections mentioned in the text, the latter exerts itself much more than the former; that, from the original constitution of human nature, we much more generally and sensibly compassionate the distressed, than rejoice with the prosperous, requires to be particularly considered. This observation, therefore, with the reflections which arise out of it, and which it leads our thoughts to, shall be the subject of another discourse.

[21] For the conclusion of this, let me just take notice of the danger of over-great refinements; of going besides or beyond the plain, obvious, first appearance of things, upon the subject of morals and religion. The least observation will show how little the generality of men are capable of speculations. Therefore morality and religion must be somewhat plain and easy to be understood: it must appeal to what we call plain common sense, as distinguished from superior capacity and improvement, because it appeals to mankind. Persons of superior capacity and improvement have often fallen into errors, which no one of mere common understanding could. Is it possible that one of this latter character could ever of

himself have thought, that there was absolutely no such thing in mankind as affection to the good of others; suppose of parents to their children? or, that what he felt upon seeing a friend in distress was only fear for himself; or, upon supposition of the affections of kindness and compassion, that it was the business of wisdom and virtue to set him about extirpating them as fast as he could? And yet each of these manifest contradictions to nature has been laid down by men of speculation as a discovery in moral philosophy; which they, it seems, have found out through all the specious appearances to the contrary.

This reflection may be extended further. The extravagances of enthusiasm and superstition do not at all lie in the road of common sense: and, therefore, so far as they are *original mistakes*, must be owing to going beside or beyond it. Now, since inquiry and examination can relate only to things so obscure and uncertain as to stand in need of it, and to persons who are capable of it, the proper advice to be given to plain honest men, to secure them from the extremes both of superstition and irreligion, is that of the son of Sirach: *In every good work trust thy own soul; for this is the keeping of the commandment*, Eccclus. xxxii. 23.

II.

[OF THE RIGHT USE OF COMPASSION*.]

ROMANS XII. 15.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

[22] **T**HERE is a much more exact correspondence between the natural and moral world, than we are apt to take notice of. The inward frame of man does, in a peculiar manner, answer to the external condition and circumstances of life in which he is placed. This is a particular instance of that general observation of the son of Sirach, *All things are double one against another, and God hath made nothing imperfect*, Ecclus. xlii. 24. The several passions and affections in the heart of man, compared with the circumstances of life in which he is placed, afford, to such as will attend to them, as certain instances of final causes, as any whatever which are more commonly alleged for such : since those affections lead him to a certain determinate course of action suitable to those circumstances ; as (for instance) compassion, to relieve the dis-

* Sermon VI.

tressed. And as all observations of final causes, drawn from the principles of action in the heart of man, compared with the condition he is placed in, serve all the good uses which instances of final causes in the material world about us do; and both these are equally proofs of wisdom and design in the Author of nature; so the former serve to further good purposes; they show us what course of life we are made for, what is our duty, and, in a peculiar manner, enforce upon us the practice of it.

[23] Suppose we are capable of happiness and of misery in degrees equally intense and extreme, yet we are capable of the latter for a much longer time, beyond all comparison. We see men in the tortures of pain for hours, days, and, excepting the short suspensions of sleep, for months together, without intermission; to which no enjoyments of life do, in degree and continuance, bear any sort of proportion. And such is our make, and that of the world about us, that anything may become the instrument of pain and sorrow to us. Thus, almost any one man is capable of doing mischief to any other, though he may not be capable of doing him good; and if he be capable of doing him some good, he is capable of doing him more evil. And it is, in numberless cases, much more in our

power to lessen the miseries of others, than to promote their positive happiness, any otherwise than as the former often includes the latter; ease from misery occasioning, for some time, the greatest positive enjoyment.

[24] This constitution of nature, namely, that it is so much more in our power to occasion, and likewise to lessen misery, than to promote positive happiness, plainly required a particular affection, to hinder us from abusing, and to incline us to make a right use of the former powers, *i.e.* the powers both to occasion and to lessen misery; over and above what was necessary to induce us to make a right use of the latter power, that of promoting positive happiness. The power we have over the misery of our fellow-creatures, to occasion or lessen it, being a more important trust than the power we have of promoting their positive happiness; the former requires, and has a further, an additional, security and guard against its being violated, beyond, and over and above what the latter has. The social nature of man, and general good-will to his species, equally prevent him from doing evil, incline him to relieve the distressed, and to promote the positive happiness of his fellow-creatures; but compassion only restrains from the first, and carries him to the second; it hath nothing to do with the third.

[25] The final causes, then, of compassion may plainly be a restraint upon resentment, envy, unreasonable self-love; that is, upon all the principles from which men do evil to one another. Let us instance only in resentment. It seldom happens, in regulated societies, that men have an enemy so entirely in their power, as to be able to satiate their resentment with safety. But if we were to put this case, it is plainly supposable, that a person might bring his enemy into such a condition, as, from being the object of anger or rage, to become an object of compassion, even to himself, though the most malicious man in the world: and in this case compassion would stop him, if he could stop with safety, from pursuing his revenge any farther. But since nature has placed within us more powerful restraints to prevent mischief, and since the final cause of compassion is much more to relieve misery, let us go on to the consideration of it in this view.

[27] As this world was not intended to be a state of any great satisfaction or high enjoyment; so neither was it intended to be a mere scene of unhappiness and sorrow. Mitigations and reliefs are provided, by the merciful Author of nature, for most of the afflictions

in human life. There is kind provision made even against our frailties; as we are so constituted, that time abundantly abates our sorrows, and begets in us that resignation of temper, which ought to have been produced by a better cause—a due sense of the authority of God, and our state of dependence. This holds in respect to far the greatest part of the evils of life; I suppose, in some degree, as to pain and sickness. Now, this part of the constitution or make of man, considered as some relief to misery, and not as provision for positive happiness, is, if I may so speak, an instance of nature's compassion for us; and every natural remedy or relief to misery, may be considered in the same view.

[28] But since, in many cases, it is very much in our power to alleviate the miseries of each other; and benevolence, though natural in man to man, yet is, in a very low degree, kept down by interest and competitions; and men, for the most part, are so engaged in the business and pleasures of the world, as to overlook and turn away from objects of misery, which are plainly considered as interruptions to them in their way, as intruders upon their business, their gaiety and mirth;—compassion is an advocate within us in their behalf, to gain the unhappy admittance and access, to make their case attended to. If it sometimes

serves a contrary purpose, and makes men industriously turn away from the miserable, these are only instances of abuse and perversion: for the end for which the affection was given us, most certainly is, not to make us avoid, but to make us attend to, the objects of it. And if men would only resolve to allow this much to it, let it bring before their view, the view of their mind, the miseries of their fellow-creatures; let it gain for them that their case be considered; I am persuaded it would not fail of gaining more, and that very few real objects of charity would pass unrelieved.

[29] Pain, and sorrow, and misery, have a right to our assistance: compassion puts us in mind of the debt, and that we owe it to ourselves, as well as to the distressed. For to endeavour to get rid of the sorrow of compassion, by turning from the wretched, when yet it is in our power to relieve them, is as unnatural as to endeavour to get rid of the pain of hunger by keeping from the sight of food. That we can do one with greater success than we can the other, is no proof that one is less a violation of nature than the other. Compassion is a call, a demand of nature, to relieve the unhappy; as hunger is a natural call for food. This affection plainly gives the objects of it an additional claim to relief and

mercy, over and above what our fellow-creatures in common have to our good-will.

[30] Liberality and bounty are exceedingly commendable; and a particular distinction in such a world as this, where men set themselves to contract their heart, and close it to all interests but their own. It [liberality or bounty] is by no means to be opposed to mercy, but always accompanies it: the distinction between them is only, that the former leads our thoughts to a more promiscuous and undistinguished distribution of favours; to those who are not, as well as those who are, necessitous; whereas, the object of compassion is misery. But in the comparison, and where there is not a possibility of both, mercy is to have the preference: the affection of compassion manifestly leads us to this preference.

[31] Thus, to relieve the indigent and distressed; to single out the unhappy, from whom can be expected no returns, either of present entertainment or future service, for the objects of our favours; to esteem a man's being friendless as a recommendation; dejection, and incapacity of struggling through the world, as a motive for assisting him; in a word, to consider these circumstances of disadvantage, which are usually thought a sufficient reason for neglect and overlooking a person, as a motive for helping him forward:

this is the course of benevolence, which compassion marks out and directs us to; this is that humanity, which is so peculiarly becoming our nature and circumstances in this world.

[32] To these considerations, drawn from the nature of man, must be added the reason of the thing itself we are recommending, which accords to and shows the same. For, since it is so much more in our power to lessen the misery of our fellow-creatures, than to promote their positive happiness; in cases where there is an inconsistency, we shall be likely to do much more good by setting ourselves to mitigate the former, than by endeavouring to promote the latter.

[33] Let the competition be between the poor and the rich. It is easy, you will say, to see which will have the preference. True: but the question is, Which ought to have the preference? What proportion is there between the happiness produced by doing a favour to the indigent, and that produced by doing the same favour to one in easy circumstances? It is manifest, that the addition of a very large estate to one who before had an affluence, will in many instances yield him less new enjoyment or satisfaction, than any ordinary charity would yield to a necessitous person. So that it is not only true that our nature, *i. e.*

the voice of God within us, carries us to the exercise of charity and benevolence in the way of compassion or mercy, preferably to any other way; but we also manifestly discern much more good done by the former; or, if you will allow me the expressions, more misery annihilated, and happiness created.

[34] If charity, and benevolence, and endeavouring to do good to our fellow-creatures be anything, this observation deserves to be most seriously considered by all who have to bestow. And it holds with great exactness, when applied to the several degrees of greater and less indigency throughout the various ranks in human life: the happiness or good produced not being in proportion to what is bestowed, but in proportion to this joined with the need there was of it.

[35] It may perhaps be expected, that upon this subject notice should be taken of occasions, circumstances, and characters, which seem at once to call forth affections of different sorts. Thus, vice may be thought the object both of pity and indignation; folly, of pity and of laughter. How far this is strictly true, I shall not inquire; but only observe upon the appearance, how much more humane it is to yield and give scope to affections, which are most directly in favour of, and friendly towards our fellow-creatures; and that

there is plainly much less danger of being led wrong by these, than by the other.

[36] But, notwithstanding all that has been said in recommendation of compassion, that it is most amiable, most becoming human nature, and most useful to the world; yet it must be owned, that every affection, as distinct from a principle of reason, may rise too high, and be beyond its just proportion. And by means of this one carried too far, a man throughout his life is subject to much more uneasiness, than belongs to his share: and in particular instances, it may be in such a degree, as to incapacitate him from assisting the very person who is the object of it.

[37] But as there are some who, upon principle, set up for suppressing this affection itself as weakness, there is also I know not what of fashion on this side: and, by some means or other, the whole world almost is run into the extremes of insensibility towards the distresses of their fellow-creatures; so that general rules and exhortations must always be on the other side.

[38] And now, to go on to the uses we should make of the foregoing reflections, the further views they lead us to, and the general temper they have a tendency to beget in us. There being that distinct affection implanted in the nature of man, tending to lessen the

miseries of life, that particular provision made for abating its sorrows, more than for increasing its positive happiness, as before explained ; this may suggest to us, what should be our general aim respecting ourselves, in our passage through this world ; namely, to endeavour chiefly to escape misery, keep free from uneasiness, pain, and sorrow, or to get relief and mitigation of them ; to propose to ourselves peace and tranquillity of mind, rather than pursue after high enjoyments. This is what the constitution of nature, before explained, marks out as the course we should follow, and the end we should aim at. To make pleasure, and mirth, and jollity, our business, and be constantly hurrying about after some gay amusement, some new gratification of sense or appetite, to those who will consider the nature of man and our condition in this world, will appear the most romantic scheme of life that ever entered into thought. And yet, how many are there who go on in this course, without learning better from the daily, the hourly disappointments, listlessness, and satiety, which accompany this fashionable method of wasting away their days !

[39] The subject we have been insisting upon would lead us into the same kind of reflections, by a different connection. The miseries of life brought home to ourselves by com-

passion, viewed through this affection, considered as the sense by which they are perceived, would beget in us that moderation, humility, and soberness of mind, which has been now recommended; and which peculiarly belongs to a season of recollection*, the only purpose of which is to bring us to a just state of things, to recover us out of that forgetfulness of ourselves, and our true state, which, it is manifest, far the greatest part of men pass their whole life in. Upon this account Solomon says, that *it is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting; i. e.* it is more to a man's advantage to turn his eyes towards objects of distress, to recall sometimes to his remembrance the occasions of sorrow, than to pass all his days in thoughtless mirth and gaiety. And he represents the wise as choosing to frequent the former of these places; to be sure not for its own sake, but because *by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better.* Every one observes, how temperate and reasonable men are when humbled and brought low by afflictions, in comparison of what they are in high prosperity. By this voluntary resort to the house of mourning, which is here recommended, we might learn all those useful instructions which calamities teach, without undergoing them ourselves;

* [This Sermon was preached in Lent.]

and grow wiser and better at a more easy rate than men commonly do.

[40] The objects themselves, which in that place of sorrow lie before our view, naturally gives us a seriousness and attention, check that wantonness which is the growth of prosperity and ease, and lead us to reflect upon the deficiencies of human life itself; that *every man, at his best estate, is altogether vanity*. This would correct the florid and gaudy prospects and expectations which we are too apt to indulge, teach us to lower our notions of happiness and enjoyment, bring them down to the reality of things, to what is attainable, to what the frailty of our condition will admit of, which, for any continuance, is only tranquillity, ease, and moderate satisfactions. Thus we might at once become proof against the temptations with which the whole world almost is carried away; since it is plain, that not only what is called a life of pleasure, but also vicious pursuits in general, aim at somewhat besides, and beyond these moderate satisfactions.

[41] And as to that obstinacy and wilfulness, which render men so insensible to the motives of religion; this right sense of ourselves and of the world about us, would bend the stubborn mind, soften the heart, and make it more apt to receive impression: and this is the proper temper in which to call our ways to

remembrance, to review and set home upon ourselves the miscarriages of our past life. In such a compliant state of mind, reason and conscience will have a fair hearing; which is the preparation for, or rather the beginning of that repentance, the outward show of which we all put on at this season.

[42] *Lastly*, The various miseries of life which lie before us wherever we turn our eyes, the frailty of this mortal state we are passing through, may put us in mind that the present world is not our home; that we are merely strangers and travellers in it, as all our fathers were. It is therefore to be considered as a foreign country, in which our poverty and wants, and the insufficient supplies of them, were designed to turn our views to that higher and better state we are heirs to; a state, where will be no follies to be overlooked, no miseries to be pitied, no wants to be relieved: where the affection we have been now treating of, will happily be lost, as there will be no objects to exercise it upon: for *God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.*

III.

[OF THE USES AND ABUSES OF RESENTMENT.*]

MATTHEW V. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy : But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.

[43] SINCE perfect goodness in the Deity is the principle from whence the universe was brought into being, and by which it is preserved : and since general benevolence is the great law of the whole moral creation, it is a question which immediately occurs, “Why had man implanted in him a principle which appears the direct contrary to benevolence?” Now, the foot upon which inquiries of this kind should be treated is this ; to take human nature as it is, and the circumstances in which it is placed as they are ; and then consider the correspondence between that nature and those circumstances, or what course of action and behaviour, respecting those circumstances, any particular affection or passion leads us to. This I mention to

* Sermon VIII.


distinguish the matter now before us from disquisitions of quite another kind; namely, "Why are we not made more perfect creatures, or placed in better circumstances?" These being questions which we have not, that I know of, anything at all to do with. God Almighty undoubtedly foresaw the disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this state of things. If upon this we set ourselves to search and examine why he did not prevent them; we shall, I am afraid, be in danger of running into somewhat worse than impertinent curiosity. But upon this to examine how far the nature which he hath given us hath a respect to those circumstances, such as they are; how far it leads us to act a proper part in them, plainly belongs to us: and such inquiries are in many ways of excellent use. Thus, the thing to be considered is not, "Why we are not made of such a nature, and placed in such circumstances, as to have no need of so harsh and turbulent a passion as resentment;" but, taking our nature and condition as being what they are, "Why, or for what end, such a passion was given us:" and this chiefly in order to show what are the abuses of it.

[44] The persons who laid down for a rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy," made short work with this

matter. They did not, it seems, perceive any thing to be disapproved in hatred more than in good-will: and, according to their system of morals, our enemy was the proper natural object of one of those passions, as our neighbour was of the other of them.

This was all they had to say, and all they thought needful to be said, upon the subject. But this cannot be satisfactory; because hatred, malice, and revenge, are directly contrary to the religion we profess, and to the nature and reason of the thing itself.

[45] Therefore, since no passion God hath endued us with can be in itself evil; and yet since men frequently indulge a passion in such ways and degrees, that at length it becomes quite another thing from what it was originally in our nature; and those vices of malice and revenge, in particular, take their occasion from the natural passion of resentment: it will be needful to trace this up to its original, that we may see, "What it is in itself, as placed in our nature by its Author;" from which it will plainly appear "for what ends it was placed there." And when we know what the passion is in itself, and the ends of it, we shall easily see "what are the abuses of it, in which malice and revenge consist;" and which are so strongly forbidden in the text, by the direct contrary being commanded.



[46] Resentment is of two kinds: *Hasty and sudden*, or *settled and deliberate*. The former is called anger, and often *passion*; which, though a general word, is frequently appropriated and confined to the particular feeling, sudden anger, as distinct from deliberate resentment, malice and revenge. In all these words is usually implied somewhat vicious, somewhat unreasonable as to the occasion of the passion, or immoderate as to the degree or duration of it. But that the natural passion itself is indifferent, St. Paul has asserted in that precept, "Be ye angry, and sin not," Eph. iv. 26, which, though it is by no means to be understood as an encouragement to indulge ourselves in anger, the sense being certainly this, "Though ye be angry, sin not;" yet here is evidently a distinction made between anger and sin, between the natural passion and sinful anger.

[47] *Sudden anger*, upon certain occasions, is mere instinct: as merely so, as the disposition to close our eyes upon the apprehension of somewhat falling into them; and no more necessarily implies any degree of reason. I say *necessarily*: for, to be sure, *hasty*, as well as *deliberate* anger, may be occasioned by injury or contempt; in which cases, reason suggests to our thoughts that injury and contempt, which is the occasion of

the passion : but I am speaking of the former only so far as it is to be distinguished from the latter. The only way in which our reason and understanding can raise anger, is by representing to our mind injustice or injury of some kind or other. Now, momentary anger is frequently raised, not only without any real, but without any apparent reason ; that is, without any appearance of injury, as distinct from hurt or pain. It cannot, I suppose, be thought that this passion, in infants, in the lower species of animals, and, which is often seen, in men towards them ; it cannot, I say, be imagined, that these instances of this passion are the effect of reason : no, they are occasioned by mere sensation and feeling. It is opposition, sudden hurt, violence, which naturally excites the passion : and the real demerit or fault of him who offers that violence, or is the cause of that opposition or hurt, does not, in many cases, so much as come into thought.

[48] The reason and end for which man was made thus liable to this passion, is, that he might be better qualified to prevent, and likewise (or perhaps chiefly) to resist and defeat sudden force, violence, and opposition, considered merely as such, and without regard to the fault or demerit of him who is the author of them. Yet, since violence may be

considered in this other and further view, as implying fault; and since injury, as distinct from harm, may raise sudden anger, sudden anger may likewise accidentally serve to prevent, or remedy, such fault and injury. But considered as distinct from settled anger, it stands in our nature for self-defence, and not for the administration of justice. There are plainly cases, and in the uncultivated parts of the world, and where regular governments are not formed, they frequently happen, in which there is no time for consideration, and yet to be passive is certain destruction; in which sudden resistance is the only security.

[49] But from *this, deliberate anger or resentment* is essentially distinguished, as the latter is not naturally excited by, or intended to prevent mere harm without appearance of wrong or injustice. Now, in order to see, as exactly as we can, what is the natural object and occasion of such resentment, let us reflect upon the manner in which we are touched with reading, suppose, a feigned story of baseness and villany, properly worked up to move our passions. This immediately raises indignation, somewhat of a desire that it should be punished. And though the designed injury be prevented, yet that it was designed, is sufficient to raise this inward feeling. Suppose the story true, this inward feeling would be

as natural and as just: and one may venture to affirm, that there is scarce a man in the world, but would have it upon some occasions. It seems *in us* plainly connected with a sense of virtue and vice, of moral good and evil. Suppose further, we knew both the person who did and who suffered the injury: neither would this make any alteration, only that it would probably affect us more.

[50] The indignation raised by cruelty and injustice, and the desire of having it punished, which persons unconcerned would feel, is by no means malice. No; it is resentment against vice and wickedness; it is one of the common bonds by which society is held together; a fellow-feeling which each individual has in behalf of the whole species, as well as of himself. And it does not appear that this, generally speaking, is at all too high amongst mankind.

[51] Suppose, now, the injury I have been speaking of to be done against ourselves, or those whom we consider as ourselves: it is plain, the way in which we should be affected would be exactly the same in kind; but it would certainly be in a higher degree, and less transient: because a sense of our own happiness and misery is most intimately and always present to us; and, from the very constitution of our nature, we cannot but have a greater

sensibility to, and be more deeply interested in, what concerns ourselves.

[52] And this seems to be the whole of this passion which is, properly speaking, natural to mankind; namely, a resentment against injury and wickedness in general: and in a higher degree when towards ourselves, in proportion to the greater regard which men naturally have for themselves, than for others.

[53] From hence it appears, that it is not natural, but moral evil: it is not suffering, but injury, which raises that anger or resentment, which is of any continuance. The natural object of it is not one, who appears to the suffering person to have been only the innocent occasion of his pain or loss, but one who has been in a moral sense injurious either to ourselves or others.

[54] This is abundantly confirmed by observing, what it is which heightens or lessens resentment; namely, the same which aggravates or lessens the fault; friendship and former obligations, on one hand; or inadvertency, strong temptations, and mistake, on the other.

[55] All this is so much understood by mankind, how little soever it be reflected upon, that a person would be reckoned quite distracted, who should coolly resent a harm, which had not to himself the appearance of injury or

wrong, Men do indeed resent what is occasioned through carelessness; but then they expect observance as their due, and so that carelessness is considered as faulty. It is likewise true, that they resent more strongly an injury done, than one which, though designed, was prevented, in cases where the guilt is perhaps the same; the reason, however, is not that bare pain or loss raises resentment, but, that it gives a new, and, as I may speak, additional sense of the injury or injustice. According to the natural course of the passions, the degrees of resentment are in proportion, not only to the degree of design and deliberation in the injurious person, but in proportion to this, joined with the degree of the evil designed or premeditated; since this likewise comes in to make the injustice greater or less. And the evil or harm will appear greater when they feel it, than when they only reflect upon it: so, therefore, the injury and consequently the resentment will be greater.

[56] The natural object or occasion of settled resentment, then, being injury, as distinct from pain or loss, it is easy to see, that to prevent and to remedy such injury, and the miseries arising from it, is the end for which this passion was implanted in man. It is to be considered as a weapon put into our hands by nature, against injury, injustice, and cruelty.

How it may be innocently employed and made use of, shall presently be mentioned.

[57] The account which has been now given of this passion is, in brief, that sudden anger is raised by, and was chiefly intended to prevent or remedy, mere harm, distinct from injury : but that it *may* be raised by injury, and *may* serve to prevent or to remedy it ; and then the occasions and effects of it are the same with the occasions and effects of deliberate anger. But they are essentially distinguished in this, that the latter is never occasioned by harm, distinct from injury ; and its natural proper end is, to remedy or prevent only that harm, which implies, or is supposed to imply, injury or moral wrong.

[58] Every one sees, that these observations do not relate to those who have habitually suppressed the course of their passions and affections, out of regard either to interest or virtue ; or who, from habits of vice and folly, have changed their nature. But, I suppose, there can be no doubt but this, now described, is the general course of resentment, considered as a natural passion, neither increased by indulgence, nor corrected by virtue, nor prevailed over by other passions, or particular habits of life.

[59] As to the abuses of anger, which it is to be observed may be in all different de-

grees, the first which occurs is what is commonly called *passion*—to which some men are liable, in the same way as others are to the *epilepsy*, or any sudden particular disorder. This distemper of the mind seizes them upon the least occasion in the world, and perpetually without any real reason at all; and by means of it they are plainly, every day, every waking hour of their lives, liable and in danger of running into the most extravagant outrages.

[60] Of a less boisterous, but not of a more innocent kind, is *peevishness*; which I mention with pity, with real pity to the unhappy creatures, who from their inferior station, or other circumstances and relations, are obliged to be in the way of, and to serve for a supply to it. Both these, for aught that I can see, are one and the same principle: but as it takes root in minds of different makes, it appears differently, and so is come to be distinguished by different names. That which, in a more feeble temper, is peevishness, and languidly discharges itself upon every thing which comes in its way; the same principle, in a temper of greater force and stronger passions, becomes rage and fury. In one, the humour discharges itself at once; in the other it is continually discharging. This is the account of *passion* and *peevishness*, as distinct from each other, and appearing in different

persons. It is no objection against the truth of it, that they are both to be seen sometimes in one and the same person.

[61] With respect to deliberate resentment, the chief instances of abuse are: when, from partiality to ourselves, we imagine an injury done us, when there is none: when this partiality represents it to us greater than it really is: when we fall into that extravagant and monstrous kind of resentment, towards one who has innocently been the occasion of evil to us; that is, resentment upon account of pain or inconvenience, without injury—which is the same absurdity as settled anger at a thing that is inanimate. When the indignation against injury and injustice rises too high, and is beyond proportion to the particular ill action it is exercised upon: or lastly, when pain or harm of any kind is inflicted merely in consequence of, and to gratify that resentment, though naturally raised.

[62] It would be endless to descend into and explain all the peculiarities of perverseness and wayward humour, which might be traced up to this passion. But there is one thing which so generally belongs to, and accompanies all excess and abuse of it, as to require being mentioned: a certain determination, and resolute bent of mind, not to be convinced or set right; though be it ever so plain, that there is

no reason for the displeasure, that it was raised merely by error or misunderstanding. In this there is doubtless a great mixture of pride; but there is somewhat more, which I cannot otherwise express than that resentment has taken possession of the temper and of the mind, and will not quit its hold. It would be too minute to inquire, whether this be anything more than bare obstinacy; it is sufficient to observe, that it, in a very particular manner and degree, belongs to the abuses of this passion.

[63] But, notwithstanding all these abuses, "Is not just indignation against cruelty and wrong, one of the *instruments of death* which the Author of our nature hath provided? Are not cruelty, injustice, and wrong, the natural objects of that indignation? Surely then it may, one way or other, be innocently employed against them." True. Since therefore it is necessary for the very subsistence of the world, that injury, injustice, and cruelty, should be punished: and since compassion, which is so natural to mankind, would render that execution of justice exceedingly difficult and uneasy; indignation against vice and wickedness is, and may be allowed to be, a balance to that weakness of pity, and also to anything else which would prevent the necessary methods of severity.

[64] Those who have never thought upon these subjects, may perhaps not see the weight of this: but let us suppose a person guilty of murder, or any other action of cruelty, and that mankind had naturally no indignation against such wickedness and the authors of it; but that everybody was affected towards such a criminal in the same way as towards an innocent man: compassion, amongst other things, would render the execution of justice exceedingly painful and difficult, and would often quite prevent it. And notwithstanding that the principle of benevolence is denied by some, and is really in a very low degree, that men are in great measure insensible to the happiness of their fellow-creatures; yet they are not insensible to their misery, but are very strongly moved with it: insomuch that there plainly is occasion for that feeling which is raised by guilt and demerit, as a balance to that of compassion. Thus much may, I think, justly be allowed to resentment, in the strictest way of moral consideration.

[65] The good influence which this passion has, in fact, upon the affairs of the world, is obvious to every one's notice. Men are plainly restrained from injuring their fellow-creatures by fear of their resentment; and it is very happy that they are so, when they would not be restrained by a principle of

virtue. And after an injury is done, and there is a necessity that the offender should be brought to justice; the cool consideration of reason, that the security and peace of society require examples of justice should be made, might indeed be sufficient to procure laws to be enacted, and sentence passed: but is it that cool reflection in the injured person which, for the most part, brings the offender to justice? Or is it not resentment and indignation against the injury and the author of it? I am afraid there is no doubt which is commonly the case. This, however, is to be considered as a good effect, notwithstanding it were much to be wished, that men would act from a better principle—reason and cool reflection.

[66] The account now given of the passion of resentment, as distinct from all the abuses of it, may suggest to our thoughts the following reflections:

First, That vice is indeed of ill desert, and must finally be punished. Why should men dispute concerning the reality of virtue, and whether it be founded in the nature of things, which yet surely is not matter of question; but why should this, I say, be disputed, when every man carries about him this passion, which affords him demonstration that the rules of justice and equity are to be the guide of his actions? For every man naturally

feels an indignation upon seeing instances of villany and baseness, and therefore cannot commit the same without being self-condemned.

[67] *Secondly*, That we should learn to be cautious, lest we *charge God foolishly*, by ascribing that to him, or the nature he has given us, which is owing wholly to our own abuse of it. Men may speak of the degeneracy and corruption of the world, according to the experience they have had of it; but human nature, considered as the Divine workmanship, should, methinks, be treated as sacred: for *in the image of God made he man*. That passion, from whence men take occasion to run into the dreadful vices of malice and revenge; even that passion, as implanted in our nature by God, is not only innocent, but a generous movement of mind. It is in itself, and in its original, no more than indignation against injury and wickedness: that which is the only deformity in the creation, and the only reasonable object of abhorrence and dislike. How manifold evidence have we of the Divine wisdom and goodness, when even pain in the natural world, and the passion we have been now considering in the moral, come out instances of it!

IV.

[OF THE DUTY OF FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES*.]

MATTHEW V. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy : But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.

[68] **A**S God Almighty foresaw the irregularities and disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this state of things, he hath graciously made some provision against them, by giving us several passions and affections, which arise from, or whose objects are, those disorders. Of this sort are fear, resentment, compassion, and others; of which there could be no occasion or use in a perfect state : but in the present we should be exposed to greater inconveniences without them; though there are very considerable ones, which they themselves are the occasions of. They are incumbrances indeed, but such as we are obliged to carry about with us through this various journey of life : some of them as a guard against the violent assaults

• Sermon IX.

of others; and, in our own defence, some in behalf of others; and all of them to put us upon and help to carry us through a course of behaviour suitable to our condition, in default of that perfection of wisdom and virtue, which would be, in all respects, our better security.

[69] The passion of anger or resentment hath already been largely treated of. It hath been shown, that mankind naturally feel some emotion of mind against injury and injustice, whoever are the sufferers by it, and even though the injurious design be prevented from taking effect. Let this be called anger, indignation, resentment, or by whatever name any one shall choose; the thing itself is understood, and is plainly natural. It has likewise been observed that this natural indignation is generally moderate and low enough in mankind, in each particular man, when the injury which excites it doth not affect himself, or one whom he considers as himself. Therefore the precepts to *forgive* and to *love our enemies*, do not relate to that general indignation against injury, and the authors of it, but to this feeling, or resentment, when raised by private or personal injury. But no man could be thought in earnest who should assert, that though indignation against injury, when others are the sufferers, is innocent and just, yet the same

indignation against it, when we ourselves are the sufferers, becomes faulty and blameable. These precepts, therefore, cannot be understood to forbid this in the latter case, more than in the former. Nay, they cannot be understood to forbid this feeling in the latter case, though raised to a higher degree than in the former; because, as was also observed further, from the very constitution of our nature, we cannot but have a greater sensibility to what concerns ourselves. Therefore the precepts in the text, and others of the like import with them, must be understood to forbid only the excess and abuse of this natural feeling, in cases of personal and private injury: the chief instances of which excess and abuse have likewise been already remarked; and all of them, excepting that of retaliation, do so plainly, in the very terms, express somewhat unreasonable, disproportionate, and absurd, as to admit of no pretence or shadow of justification.

[70] But, since custom and false honour are on the side of retaliation and revenge, when the resentment is natural and just; and reasons are sometimes offered in justification of revenge in these cases; and since love of our enemies is thought *too hard a saying* to be obeyed, I will show *the absolute unlawfulness of the former—the obligations we are under to*

the latter, and then proceed to some reflections, which may have a more direct and immediate tendency to beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us.

In showing the unlawfulness of revenge, it is not my present design to examine what is alleged in favour of it, from the tyranny of custom and false honour, but only to consider the nature and reason of the thing itself; which ought now to extirpate everything of that kind.

[71] *First*, Let us begin with the supposition of that being innocent which is pleaded for, and which shall be shown to be altogether vicious, the supposition that we were allowed to *render evil for evil*, and see what would be the consequence. Malice or resentment towards any man hath plainly a tendency to beget the same passion in him who is the object of it, and this again increases it in the other. It is of the very nature of this vice to propagate itself, not only by way of example, which it does in common with other vices, but in a peculiar way of its own; for resentment itself, as well as what is done in consequence of it, is the object of resentment. Hence it comes to pass, that the first offence, even when so slight as presently to be dropped and forgotten, becomes the occasion of entering into a long intercourse of ill offices; nei-

ther is it at all uncommon to see persons, in this progress of strife and variance, change parts, and him who was at first the injured person become more injurious and blameable than the aggressor.

[72] Put the case, then, that the law of retaliation was universally received and allowed as an innocent rule of life by all: and the observance of it thought by many (and then it would soon come to be thought by all) a point of honour: this supposes every man in private cases to pass sentence in his own cause, and likewise that anger or resentment is to be the judge. Thus from the numberless partialities which we all have for ourselves, every one would often think himself injured when he was not, and in most cases would represent an injury as much greater than it really is; the imagined dignity of the person offended would scarce ever fail to magnify the offence. And if bare retaliation, or returning just the mischief received, always begets resentment in the person upon whom we retaliate, what would that excess do?

[73] Add to this that he likewise has his partialities. There is no going on to represent this scene of rage and madness: it is manifest there would be no bounds nor any end. "If the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water," what would it come

to when allowed this free and unrestrained course? "As coals are to burning coals, or wood to fire," so would these "contentious men be to kindle strife." And since the indulgence of revenge hath manifestly this tendency, and does actually produce these effects in proportion as it is allowed, a passion of so dangerous a nature ought not to be indulged, were there no other reason against it.

[74] *Secondly*, It hath been shown that the passion of resentment was placed in man upon supposition of, and as a prevention or remedy to, irregularity and disorder. Now, whether it be allowed or not, that the passion itself, and the gratification of it, joined together, are painful to the malicious person; it must however be so with respect to the person towards whom it is exercised, and upon whom the revenge is taken. Now, if we consider mankind, according to that fine allusion of St. Paul, "as one body, and every one members one of another," it must be allowed that resentment is with respect to society a painful remedy. Thus, then, the very notion or idea of this passion, as a remedy or prevention of evil, and as in itself a painful means, plainly shows that it ought never to be made use of, but only in order to produce some greater good.

[75] It is to be observed that this argu-

ment is not founded upon an allusion or simile, but that it is drawn from the very nature of the passion itself, and the end for which it was given us. We are obliged to make use of words taken from sensible things, to explain what is most remote from them: and every one sees from whence the words prevention and remedy are taken. But if you please, let these words be dropped: the thing itself, I suppose, may be expressed without them.

[76] That mankind is a community, that we all stand in a relation to each other, that there is a public end and interest of society which each particular is obliged to promote, is the sum of morals. Consider, then, the passion of resentment, as given to this one body, as given to society. Nothing can be more manifest, than that resentment is to be considered as a secondary passion, placed in us upon supposition, upon account of, and with regard to injury; not, to be sure, to promote and further it, but to render it, and the inconveniences and miseries arising from it, less and fewer than they would be without this passion. It is as manifest that the indulgence of it is, with regard to society, a painful means of obtaining these ends. Considered in itself, it is very undesirable, and what society must very much wish to be with-

out. It is in every instance absolutely an evil in itself; because it implies producing misery; and, consequently, must never be indulged or gratified for itself, by any one who considers mankind as a community or family, and himself as a member of it.

[77] Let us now take this in another view. Every natural appetite, passion, and affection, may be gratified in particular instances, without being subservient to the particular chief end, for which these several principles were respectively implanted in our nature. And if neither this end, nor any other moral obligation, be contradicted, such gratification is innocent. Thus, I suppose, there are cases in which each of these principles, this one of resentment excepted, may innocently be gratified, without being subservient to what is the main end of it: that is, though it does not conduce to, yet it may be gratified without contradicting that end, or any other obligation. But the gratification of resentment, if it be not conducive to the end for which it was given us, must necessarily contradict, not only the general obligation to benevolence, but likewise that particular end itself. The end for which it was given is, to prevent or remedy injury; *i. e.* the misery occasioned by injury; *i. e.* misery itself: and the gratification of it consists in producing

misery; *i.e.* in contradicting the end for which it was implanted in our nature.

[78] This whole reasoning is built upon the difference there is between this passion and all others. No other principle, or passion, hath for its end the misery of our fellow-creatures. But malice and revenge meditates evil itself; and to do mischief, to be the author of misery, is the very thing which gratifies the passion: this is what it directly tends towards, as its proper design. Other vices eventually do mischief; this alone aims at it as an end.

[79] Nothing can with reason be urged in justification of revenge, from the good effects which the indulgence of it were before mentioned* to have upon the affairs of the world; because, though it be a remarkable instance of the wisdom of Providence, to bring good out of evil, yet vice is vice to him who is guilty of it. "But suppose these good effects are foreseen;" that is, suppose reason in a particular case leads a man the same way as passion: why then, to be sure, he should follow his reason in this as well as in all other cases. So that, turn the matter which way ever you will, no more can be allowed to this passion than hath been already†.

[80] As to that love of our enemies

* Art. [65].

† Art. [64].

which is commanded ; this supposes the general obligation to benevolence or good-will towards mankind ; and this being supposed, that precept is no more than to forgive injuries ; that is, to keep clear of those abuses before mentioned ; because, that we have the habitual temper of benevolence is taken for granted.

[81] Resentment is not inconsistent with good-will : for we often see both together in very high degrees, not only in parents towards their children, but in cases of friendship and dependence, where there is no natural relation. These contrary passions, though they may lessen, do not necessarily destroy each other. We may therefore love our enemy, and yet have resentment against him for his injurious behaviour towards us. But when this resentment entirely destroys our natural benevolence towards him, it is excessive, and becomes malice or revenge. The command to prevent its having this effect, *i. e.* to forgive injuries, is the same as to love our enemies ; because that love is always supposed, unless destroyed by resentment.

[82] “ But though mankind is the natural object of benevolence, yet may it not be lessened upon vice, *i. e.* injury ? ” Allowed : but if every degree of vice or injury must destroy that benevolence, then no man is the object of our love ; for no man is without faults.

[83] "But if lower instances of injury may lessen our benevolence, why may not higher, or the highest, destroy it?" The answer is obvious. It is not man's being a social creature, much less his being a moral agent, from whence *alone* our obligations to good-will towards him arise. There is an obligation to it prior to either of these, arising from his being a sensible creature; that is, capable of happiness or misery. Now this obligation cannot be superseded by his moral character. What justifies public execution is, not that the guilt or demerit of the criminal dispenses with the obligation of good-will; neither would this justify any severity; but that his life is inconsistent with the quiet and happiness of the world: that is, a general and more enlarged obligation necessarily destroys a particular and more confined one of the same kind, inconsistent with it. Guilt or injury then does not dispense with or supersede the duty of love and good-will.

[84] Neither does that peculiar regard to ourselves, which was before allowed to be natural* to mankind, dispense with it: because that can no way innocently heighten our resentment against those who have been injurious to ourselves in particular, any otherwise than as it heightens our sense of the injury or

* Art. [51].

guilt ; and guilt, though in the highest degree, does not, as hath been shown, dispense with or supersede the duty of love and good-will.

[85] If all this be true, what can a man say, who will dispute the reasonableness, or the possibility, of obeying the divine precept we are now considering? Let him speak out, and it must be thus he will speak. "Mankind, *i. e.* a creature defective and faulty, is the proper object of good-will, whatever his faults are, when they respect others ; but not when they respect me myself." That men should be *affected* in this manner, and *act* accordingly, is to be accounted for like other vices ; but to *assert* that it *ought*, and *must* be thus, is self-partiality possessed of the very understanding.

[86] Thus, love to our enemies, and those who have been injurious to us, is so far from being a *rant*, as it has been profanely called, that it is in truth the law of our nature, and what every one must see and own, who is not quite blinded with self-love.

[87] From hence it is easy to see, what is the degree in which we are commanded to love our enemies, or those who have been injurious to us. It were well if it could be as easily reduced to practice. It cannot be imagined, that we are required to love them with any peculiar kind of affection. But sup-


pose the person injured to have a due natural sense of the injury, and no more; he ought to be affected towards the injurious person in the same way any good men, uninterested in the case, would be; if they had the same just sense, which we have supposed the injured person to have, of the fault: after which there will yet remain real good-will towards the offender.

[88] Now, what is there in all this, which should be thought impracticable? I am sure there is nothing in it unreasonable. It is indeed no more than that we should not indulge a passion, which, if generally indulged, would propagate itself so as almost to lay waste the world: that we should suppress that partial, that false self-love, which is the weakness of our nature; that uneasiness and misery should not be produced, without any good purpose to be served by it; and that we should not be affected towards persons differently from what their nature and character require.

[89] But since to be convinced that any temper of mind and course of behaviour is our duty, and the contrary vicious, hath but a distant influence upon our temper and actions, let me add some few reflections, which may have a more direct tendency to subdue those vices in the heart, to beget in us this right temper, and lead us to a right behaviour to-

wards those who have offended us; which reflections, however, shall be such as will further show the obligations we are under to it.

[90] No one, I suppose, would choose to have an indignity put upon him, or be injuriously treated. If, then, there be any probability of a misunderstanding in the case, either from our imagining we are injured when we are not, or representing the injury to ourselves as greater than it really is, one would hope an intimation of this sort might be kindly received, and that people would be glad to find the injury not so great as they imagined. Therefore, without knowing particulars, I take upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a manner certain, that the offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in such a peculiar situation, with respect to injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are, than our eye can see itself. If we could place ourselves at a due distance, *i. e.* be really unprejudiced, we should frequently discern that to be in reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, which we now fancy we see to be malice or scorn. From this proper point of view we should likewise, in all probability, see something of these latter in ourselves, and



most certainly a great deal of the former. Thus the indignity of injury would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all. Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind: in these cases it magnifies everything which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens everything amiss in ourselves.

[91] Anger also, or hatred, may be considered as another false medium of viewing things, which always represents characters and actions much worse than they really are. Ill-will not only never speaks, but never thinks well, of the person towards whom it is exercised. Thus, in cases of offence and enmity, the whole character and behaviour is considered with an eye to that particular part which has offended us, and the whole man appears monstrous, without anything right or human in him; whereas, the resentment should surely, at least, be confined to that particular part of the behaviour which gave offence, since the other parts of a man's life and character stand just the same as they did before.

In general, there are very few instances of enmity carried to any length, but inadvertency, misunderstanding, some real mistake of the case, on one side however, if not on both, has a great share in it.

[92] If these things were attended to,

these ill-humours could not be carried to any length amongst good men, and they would be exceedingly abated amongst all. And one would hope they might be attended to: for all that these cautions come to is really no more than desiring that things may be considered and judged of as they are in themselves, that we should have an eye to and beware of what would otherwise lead us into mistakes. So that to make allowances for inadvertence, misunderstanding, for the partialities of self-love, and the false light which anger sets things in—I say, to make allowances for these, is not to be spoken of as an instance of humbleness of mind, or meekness and moderation of temper, but as what common sense would suggest, to avoid judging wrong of a matter before us, though virtue and morals were out of the case. And therefore it as much belongs to ill men, who will indulge the vice I have been arguing against, as to good men who endeavour to subdue it in themselves. In a word, all these cautions concerning anger and self-love are no more than desiring a man, who was looking through a glass which either magnified or lessened, to take notice that the objects are not in themselves what they appear through that medium.

[93] To all these things one might add, that resentment being out of the case, there

is not, properly speaking, any such thing as direct ill-will in one man towards another. Therefore the first indignity or injury, if it be not owing to inadvertence or misunderstanding, may however be resolved into other particular passions or self-love: principles quite distinct from ill-will, and which we ought all to be disposed to excuse in others, from experiencing so much of them in ourselves. A great man of antiquity is reported to have said, that as he never was indulgent to any one fault in himself, he could not excuse those of others. This sentence could scarce with decency come out of the mouth of any human creature. But if we invert the former part, and put it thus—that he was indulgent to many faults in himself, as it is to be feared the best of us are, and yet was implacable, how monstrous would such an assertion appear! And this is the case in respect to every human creature, in proportion as he is without the forgiving spirit I have been recommending.

[94] Further, Though injury, injustice, oppression, the baseness of ingratitude, are the natural objects of indignation, or, if you please, of resentment, as before explained, yet they are likewise the objects of compassion, as they are their own punishment, and without repentance will for ever be so. No one ever did a designed injury to another,

but at the same time he did a much greater to himself. If therefore we could consider things justly, such an one is, according to the natural course of our affections, an object of compassion, as well as of displeasure: and to be affected really in this manner, I say really, in opposition to show and pretence, argues the true greatness of mind. We have an example of forgiveness in this way in its utmost perfection, and which indeed includes in it all that is good, in that prayer of our blessed Saviour on the cross—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!"

[95] But, *lastly*, The offences which we are all guilty of against God, and the injuries which men do to each other, are often mentioned together; and, making allowances for the infinite distance between the Majesty of heaven and a frail mortal, and likewise for this, that he cannot possibly be affected or moved as we are; offences committed by others against ourselves, and the manner in which we are apt to be affected with them, give a real occasion for calling to mind our own sins against God. Now, there is an apprehension and presentiment natural to mankind, that we ourselves shall one time or other be dealt with as we deal with others, and a peculiar acquiescence in and feeling of the equity and justice of this equal distri-

bution. This natural notion of equity the son of Sirach has put in the strongest way—"He that revengeth shall find vengeance from the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance. Forgive thy neighbour the hurt he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest. One man beareth hatred against another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord? He showeth no mercy to a man which is like himself, and doth he ask forgiveness of his own sins?" Ecclus. xxviii. 1—4. Let any one read our Saviour's parable of "the king who took account of his servants," Matt. xviii.; and the equity and rightness of the sentence which was passed upon him who was unmerciful to his fellow-servant, will be felt. There is somewhat in human nature, which accords to and falls in with that method of determination. Let us then place before our eyes the time which is represented in the parable; that of our own death, or the final judgment. Suppose yourselves under the apprehensions of approaching death; that you were just going to appear, naked and without disguise, before the Judge of all the earth, to give an account of your behaviour towards your fellow-creatures, could anything raise more dreadful apprehensions of that judgment than the reflection that you had been implacable and

without mercy towards those who had offended you — without that forgiving spirit towards others, which, that it may now be exercised towards yourselves, is your only hope? And these natural apprehensions are authorized by our Saviour's application of the parable—
“So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”
On the other hand, suppose a good man in the same circumstance, in the last part and close of life, conscious of many frailties, as the best are, but conscious too that he had been meek, forgiving, and merciful; that he had in simplicity of heart been ready to pass over offences against himself;—the having felt this good spirit will give him, not only a full view of the amiableness of it, but the surest hope that he shall meet with it in his Judge. This likewise is confirmed by his own declaration :
“If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will likewise forgive you.”
And that we might have a constant sense of it upon our mind, the condition is expressed in our daily prayer. A forgiving spirit is therefore absolutely necessary, as ever we hope for pardon of our own sins, as ever we hope for peace of mind in our dying moments, or for the Divine mercy at that day when we shall most stand in need of it.

V.

[OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR AS RELATED
TO SELF-LOVE*.]

ROMANS XIII. 9.

*And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly
comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love
thy neighbour as thyself.*

[96] **I**T is commonly observed, that there is a disposition in men to complain of the viciousness and corruption of the age in which they live, as greater than that of former ones : which is usually followed with this further observation, that mankind has been in that respect much the same in all times. Now, to determine whether this last be not contradicted by the accounts of history : thus much can scarce be doubted, that vice and folly takes different turns, and some particular kinds of it are more open and avowed in some ages than in others ; and, I suppose, it may be spoken of as very much the distinction of the present, to profess a contracted spirit, and greater regards to self-interest, than appears to have been done formerly. Upon this ac-

* Sermon XI.

count it seems worth while to inquire, whether private interest is likely to be promoted in proportion to the degree in which self-love engrosses us, and prevails over all other principles; or *whether the contracted affection may not possibly be so prevalent as to disappoint itself, and even contradict its own end, private good?*

[97] And since, further, there is generally thought to be some peculiar kind of contrariety between self-love and the love of our neighbour—between the pursuit of public and of private good; insomuch, that when you are recommending one of these, you are supposed to be speaking against the other; and from hence arises a secret prejudice against, and frequently open scorn of, all talk of public spirit and real good-will to our fellow-creatures; it will be necessary to *inquire what respect benevolence hath to self-love, and the pursuit of private interest to the pursuit of public?* Or whether there be anything of that peculiar inconsistency and contrariety between them, over and above what there is between self-love and other passions and particular affections, and their respective pursuits?

These inquiries, it is hoped, may be favourably attended to; for there shall be all possible concessions made to the favourite passion, which hath so much allowed to it, and whose

cause is so universally pleaded ; it shall be treated with the utmost tenderness and concern for its interests.

[98] In order to this, as well as to determine the fore-mentioned questions, it will be necessary to consider the nature, the object, and end of that self-love, as distinguished from other principles or affections in the mind, and their respective objects.

[99] Every man hath a general desire of his own happiness ; and likewise a variety of particular affections, passions, and appetites, to particular external objects. The former proceeds from, or is, self-love, and seems inseparable from all sensible creatures, who can reflect upon themselves and their own interest or happiness, so as to have that interest an object to their minds : what is to be said of the latter is, that they proceed from, or together make up, that particular nature, according to which man is made. The object the former pursues is somewhat internal, our own happiness, enjoyment, satisfaction ; whether we have or have not a distinct particular perception what it is, or wherein it consists : the objects of the latter are this or that particular external thing, which the affections tend towards, and of which it hath always a particular idea or perception. The principle we call self-love never seeks anything external for the sake of the thing, but

only as a means of happiness or good: particular affections rest in the external things themselves. One belongs to man as a reasonable creature reflecting upon his own interest or happiness; the other, though quite distinct from reason, are as much a part of human nature.

[100] That all particular appetites and passions are towards *external things themselves*, distinct from the *pleasure arising from them*, is manifested from hence, that there could not be this pleasure, were it not for that prior suitability between the object and the passion: there could be no enjoyment or delight for one thing more than another, from eating food more than from swallowing a stone, if there were not an affection or appetite to one thing more than another.

[101] Every particular affection, even the love of our neighbour, is as really our own affection, as self-love; and the pleasure arising from its gratification is as much my own pleasure, as the pleasure self-love would have from knowing I myself should be happy some time hence, would be my own pleasure. And if, because every particular affection is a man's *own*, and the pleasure arising from its gratification his own pleasure, or pleasure to *himself*, such particular affection must be called


self-love; according to this way of speaking, no creature whatever can possibly act but merely from self-love; and every action and every affection whatever is to be resolved up into this one principle.

[102] But then this is not the language of mankind: or, if it were, we should want words to express the difference between the principle of an action, proceeding from cool consideration that it will be to my own advantage; and an action, suppose of revenge, or of friendship, by which a man runs upon certain ruin, to do evil or good to another. It is manifest the principles of these actions are totally different, and so want different words to be distinguished by: all that they agree in is, that they both proceed from, and are done to gratify an inclination in a man's self. But the principle or inclination in one case is self-love; in the other, hatred, or love of another. There is then a distinction between the cool principle of self-love, or general desire of our own happiness, as one part of our nature, and one principle of action; and the particular affections towards particular external objects, as another part of our nature, and another principle of action. How much soever, therefore, is to be allowed to self-love, yet it cannot be allowed to be the whole of our inward constitution;

because, you see, there are other parts or principles which come into it.

[103] Further, private happiness or good is all which self-love can make us desire or be concerned about. In having this consists its gratification; it is an affection to ourselves—a regard to our own interest, happiness, and private good: and in the proportion a man hath this, he is interested, or a lover of himself. Let this be kept in mind, because there is commonly, as I shall presently have occasion to observe, another sense put upon these words. On the other hand, particular affections tend towards particular external things; these are their objects; having these is their end; in this consists their gratification: no matter whether it be, or be not, upon the whole, our interest or happiness. An action, done from the former of these principles, is called an interested action. An action, proceeding from any of the latter, has its denomination of passionate, ambitious, friendly, revengful, or any other, from the particular appetite or affection from which it proceeds. Thus self-love, as one part of human nature, and the several particular principles as the other part, are themselves, their objects, and ends, stated and shown.

[104] From hence it will be easy to see how far, and in what ways, each of these can



contribute and be subservient to the private good of the individual. Happiness does not consist in self-love. The desire of happiness is no more the thing itself, than the desire of riches is the possession or enjoyment of them. People may love themselves with the most entire and unbounded affection, and yet be extremely miserable. Neither can self-love any way help them out, but by setting them on work to get rid of the causes of their misery, to gain or make use of those objects which are by nature adapted to afford satisfaction. Happiness or satisfaction consists only in the enjoyment of those objects which are by nature suited to our several particular appetites, passions, and affections. So that if self-love wholly engrosses us, and leaves no room for any other principle, there can be absolutely no such thing at all as happiness or enjoyment of any kind whatever; since happiness consists in the gratification of particular passions, which supposes the having of them.

[105] Self-love then does not constitute *this* or *that* to be our interest or good; but our interest or good being constituted by nature and supposed, self-love only puts us upon obtaining and securing it. Therefore, if it be possible that self-love may prevail and exert itself in a degree or manner which is

not subservient to this end, then it will not follow that our interest will be promoted in proportion to the degree in which that principle engrosses us, and prevails over others.

[106] Nay, further, the private and contracted affection, when it is not subservient to this end, private good, may, for anything that appears, have a direct contrary tendency and effect. And if we will consider the matter, we shall see that it often really has.

Disengagement is absolutely necessary to enjoyment; and a person may have so steady and fixed an eye upon his own interest, whatever he places in it, as may hinder him from *attending* to many gratifications within his reach, which others have their minds *free* and *open* to. Over-fondness for a child is not generally thought to be for its advantage; and, if there be any guess to be made from appearances, surely that character we call *selfish* is not the most promising for happiness. Such a temper may plainly be, and exert itself in a degree and manner which may give unnecessary and useless solicitude and anxiety, in a degree and manner which may prevent obtaining the means and materials of enjoyment, as well as the making use of them.


[107] Immoderate self-love does very ill consult its own interest; and how much soever a paradox it may appear, it is certainly

true, that, even from self-love, we should endeavour to get over all inordinate regard to, and consideration of, ourselves. Every one of our passions and affections hath its natural stint and bound, which may easily be exceeded; whereas our enjoyments can possibly be but in a determinate measure and degree. Therefore such excess of the affection, since it cannot procure any enjoyment, must in all cases be useless, but is generally attended with inconveniences, and often is downright pain and misery. This holds as much with regard to self-love as to all other affections. The natural degree of it, so far as it sets us on work to gain and make use of the materials of satisfaction, may be to our real advantage: but beyond or beside this, it is in several respects an inconvenience and disadvantage. Thus it appears that private interest is so far from being likely to be promoted in proportion to the degree in which self-love engrosses us, and prevails over all other principles, that *the contracted affection may be so prevalent as to disappoint itself and even contradict its own end, private good.*

[108] “But who, except the most sordidly covetous, ever thought there was any rivalry between the love of greatness, honour, power, or between sensual appetites, and self-love? No; there is a perfect harmony

between them. It is by means of these particular appetites and affections that self-love is gratified in enjoyment, happiness, and satisfaction. The competition and rivalry is between self-love and the love of our neighbour. That affection which leads us out of ourselves, makes us regardless of our own interest, and substitute that of another in its stead." Whether then there be any particular competition and contrariety in this case, shall now be considered.

[109] Self-love and interestedness was stated to consist in or be an affection to ourselves, a regard to our own private good: it is, therefore, distinct from benevolence, which is an affection to the good of our fellow-creatures. But that benevolence is distinct from, that is, not the same thing with self-love, is no reason for its being looked upon with any peculiar suspicion, because every principle whatever, by means of which self-love is gratified, is distinct from it. And all things, which are distinct from each other, are equally so. A man has an affection or aversion to another: that one of these tends to, and is gratified by doing good, that the other tends to, and is gratified by doing harm, does not in the least alter the respect which either one or the other of these inward feelings has to self-love.



[110] We use the word *property* so as to exclude any other persons having an interest in that, of which we say a particular man has the property: and we often use the word *selfish* so as to exclude in the same manner all regards to the good of others. But the cases are not parallel: for though that exclusion is really part of the idea of property, yet such positive exclusion, or bringing this peculiar disregard to the good of others into the idea of self-love, is in reality adding to the idea, or changing it from what it was before stated to consist in, namely, in an affection to ourselves*. This being the whole idea of self-love, it can no otherwise exclude good-will or love of others, than merely by not including it, no otherwise than it excludes love of arts, or reputation, or of anything else.

[111] Neither, on the other hand, does benevolence, any more than love of arts or of reputation, exclude self-love. Love of our neighbour, then, has just the same respect to, is no more distant from self-love, than hatred of our neighbour, or than love and hatred of anything else.

[112] Thus the principles, from which men rush upon certain ruin for the destruction of an enemy, and for the preservation of a friend, have the same respect to the private

* Art. [103].

affection, are equally interested, or equally disinterested: and it is of no avail, whether they are said to be one or the other. Therefore, to those who are shocked to hear virtue spoken of as disinterested, it may be allowed, that it is indeed absurd to speak thus of it; unless hatred, several particular instances of vice, and all the common affections and aversions in mankind, are acknowledged to be disinterested too.

[113] Is there any less inconsistency between the love of inanimate things, or of creatures merely sensitive, and self-love, than between self-love, and the love of our neighbour? Is desire of, and delight in the happiness of another any more a diminution of self-love, than desire of and delight in the esteem of another? They are both equally desire of and delight in somewhat external to ourselves: either both or neither are so. The object of self-love is expressed in the term *self*: and every appetite of sense, and every particular affection of the heart, are equally interested or disinterested, because the objects of them all are equally self or somewhat else. Whatever ridicule, therefore, the mention of a disinterested principle or action may be supposed to lie open to, must, upon the matter being thus stated, relate to ambition, and

every appetite and particular affection, as much as to benevolence.

[114] And indeed all the ridicule, and all the grave perplexity, of which this subject hath had its full share, is merely from words. The most intelligible way of speaking of it seems to be this : that self-love, and the actions done in consequence of it, (for these will presently appear to be the same as to this question,) are interested ; that particular affections towards external objects, and the actions done in consequence of those affections, are not so. But every one is at liberty to use words as he pleases. All that is here insisted upon is, that ambition, revenge, benevolence, all particular passions whatever, and the actions they produce, are equally interested or disinterested.

[115] Thus it appears, that there is no peculiar contrariety between self-love and benevolence ; no greater competition between these, than between any other particular affections and self-love. This relates to the affections themselves. Let us now see whether there be any peculiar contrariety between the respective courses of life which these affections lead to ; whether there be any greater competition between the pursuit of private and of public good, than between any other particular pursuits and that of private good.

[116] There seems no other reason to suspect that there is any such peculiar contrariety, but only that the course of action which benevolence leads to, has a more direct tendency to promote the good of others, than that course of action, which love of reputation, suppose, or any other particular affection, leads to. But that any affection tends to the happiness of another, does not hinder its tending to one's own happiness too. That others enjoy the benefit of the air and the light of the sun, does not hinder but that these are as much one's own private advantage now, as they would be if we had the property of them exclusive of all others. So a pursuit which tends to promote the good of another, yet may have as great tendency to promote private interest, as a pursuit which does not tend to the good of another at all, or which is mischievous to him.

[117] All particular affections whatever, resentment, benevolence, love of arts, equally lead to a course of action for their own gratification, *i.e.* the gratification of ourselves: and the gratification of each gives delight: so far, then, it is manifest they have all the same respect to private interest. Now, take into consideration further, concerning these three pursuits, that the end of the first is the harm; of the second, the good of another; of the

last, somewhat indifferent: and is there any necessity, that these additional considerations should alter the respect which we before saw these three pursuits had to private interest; or render any one of them less conducive to it than any other?

[118] Thus, one man's affection is to honour, as his end; in order to obtain which, he thinks no pains too great. Suppose another, with such a singularity of mind, as to have the same affection to public good, as his end, which he endeavours with the same labour to obtain. In case of success, surely the man of benevolence hath as great enjoyment as the man of ambition; they both equally having the end, their affections, in the same degree, tended to; but in case of disappointment, the benevolent man has clearly the advantage; since endeavouring to do good, considered as a virtuous pursuit, is gratified by its own consciousness, *i. e.* is in a degree its own reward.

[119] And as to these two, or benevolence and any other particular passions whatever, considered in a further view, as forming a general temper, which more or less disposes us for enjoyment of all the common blessings of life, distinct from their own gratification: is benevolence less the temper of tranquillity and freedom, than ambition or covetousness?

Does the benevolent man appear less easy with himself, from his love to his neighbour? Does he less relish his being? Is there any peculiar gloom seated on his face? Is his mind less open to entertainment, to any particular gratification? Nothing is more manifest, than that being in good humour, which is benevolence whilst it lasts, is itself the temper of satisfaction and enjoyment.

[120] Suppose, then, a man sitting down to consider how he might become most easy to himself, and attain the greatest pleasure he could; all that which is his real natural happiness; this can only consist in the enjoyment of those objects which are by nature adapted to our several faculties. These particular enjoyments make up the sum total of our happiness; and they are supposed to arise from riches, honours, and the gratification of sensual appetites. Be it so: yet none profess themselves so completely happy in these enjoyments, but that there is room left in the mind for others, if they were presented to them. Nay, these, as much as they engage us, are not thought so high, but that human nature is capable even of greater. Now there have been persons in all ages, who have professed that they found satisfaction in the exercise of charity, in the love of their neighbour, in endeavouring to promote the happiness of

all they had to do with, and in the pursuit of what is just, and right, and good, as the general bent of their mind and end of their life; and that doing an action of baseness or cruelty, would be as great violence to *their* self, as much breaking in upon their nature, as any external force.

[121] Persons of this character would add, if they might be heard, that they consider themselves as acting in the view of an infinite Being, who is in a much higher sense the object of reverence and of love, than all the world besides; and, therefore, they could have no more enjoyment from a wicked action done under his eye, than the persons to whom they are making their apology could, if all mankind were the spectators of it; and that the satisfaction of approving themselves to his unerring judgment, to whom they thus refer all their actions, is a more continued settled satisfaction than any this world can afford; as also that they have, no less than others, a mind free and open to all the common innocent gratifications of it, such as they are. And, if we go no further, does there appear any absurdity in this? Will any one take upon him to say, that a man cannot find his account in this general course of life, as much as in the most unbounded ambition, or the excesses of pleasure? Or that such a person has not con-

sulted so well for himself, for the satisfaction and peace of his own mind, as the ambitious or dissolute man?

And though the consideration, that God himself will in the end justify their taste, and support their cause, is not formally to be insisted upon here; yet thus much comes in, that all enjoyments whatever are much more clear and unmixed, from the assurance that they will end well.

[122] Is it certain, then, that there is nothing in these pretensions to happiness, especially when there are not wanting persons, who have supported themselves with satisfactions of this kind in sickness, poverty, disgrace, and in the very pangs of death? whereas, it is manifest all other enjoyments fail in these circumstances. This surely looks suspicious of having somewhat in it. Self-love, methinks, should be alarmed. May she not possibly pass over greater pleasures, than those she is so wholly taken up with?

[123] The short of the matter is no more than this. Happiness consists in the gratification of certain affections, appetites, passions, with objects which are by nature adapted to them. Self-love may indeed set us on work to gratify these: but happiness or enjoyment has no immediate connexion with self-love, but arises from such gratification alone, Love

of our neighbour is one of those affections. This, considered as a virtuous principle, is gratified by a consciousness of endeavouring to promote the good of others : but considered as a natural affection, its gratification consists in the actual accomplishment of this endeavour. Now, indulgence or gratification of this affection, whether in that consciousness, or this accomplishment, has the same respect to interest, as indulgence of any other affection ; they equally proceed from, or do not proceed from, self-love ; they equally include, or equally exclude, this principle. Thus it appears, that *benevolence and the pursuit of public good have at least as great respect to self-love and the pursuit of private good, as any other particular passions, and their respective pursuits.*

[124] Neither is covetousness, whether as a temper or pursuit, any exception to this. For if by covetousness is meant the desire and pursuit of riches for their own sake, without any regard to or consideration of the uses of them ; this hath as little to do with self-love, as benevolence hath. But by this word is usually meant, not such madness and total distraction of mind, but immoderate affection to and pursuit of riches as possessions, in order to some further end ; namely, satisfaction, interest, or good. This, therefore, is not a particular affection, or particular pur-

suit, but it is the general principle of self-love, and the general pursuit of our own interest; for which reason, the word *selfish* is by every one appropriated to this temper and pursuit. Now, as it is ridiculous to assert that self-love and the love of our neighbour are the same; so neither is it asserted that following these different affections hath the same tendency and respect to our own interest. The comparison is not between self-love and the love of our neighbour; between pursuit of our own interest, and the interest of others; but between the several particular affections in human nature towards external objects, as one part of the comparison; and the one particular affection to the good of our neighbour, as the one part of it: and it has been shown, that all these have the same respect to self-love and private interest.

[125] There is indeed frequently an inconsistency, or interfering between self-love or private interest, and the several particular appetites, passions, affections, or the pursuits they lead to. But this competition or interfering is merely accidental, and happens much oftener between pride, revenge, sensual gratifications, and private interest, than between private interest and benevolence. For nothing is more common than to see men give themselves up to a passion or an affection to their

known prejudice and ruin, and in direct contradiction to manifest and real interest, and the loudest calls of self-love: whereas the seeming competitions and interfering between benevolence and private interest, relate much more to the materials or means of enjoyment, than to enjoyment itself. There is often an interfering in the former, where there is none in the latter.

[126] Thus, as to riches: so much money as a man gives away, so much less will remain in his possession. Here is a real interfering. But though a man cannot possibly give without lessening his fortune, yet there are multitudes might give without lessening their own enjoyment; because they may have more than they can turn to any real use or advantage to themselves. Thus, the more thought and time any one employs about the interests and good of others, he must necessarily have less to attend his own; but he may have so ready and large a supply of his own wants, that such thought might be really useless to himself, though of great service and assistance to others.

[127] The general mistake, that there is some greater inconsistency between endeavouring to promote the good of another and self-interest, than between self-interest and pursuing anything else, seems, as hath already been hinted, to arise from our notions of pro-

perty ; and to be carried on by this property's being supposed to be itself our happiness or good. People are so very much taken up with this one subject, that they seem from it to have formed a general way of thinking, which they apply to other things that they have nothing to do with. Hence, in a confused and slight way, it might well be taken for granted, that another's having no interest in an affection, (*i.e.* his good not being the object of it,) renders, as one may speak, the proprietor's interest in it greater ; and that if another had an interest in it, this would render his less, or occasion that such affection could not be so friendly to self-love, or conducive to private good, as an affection or pursuit which has not a regard to the good of another. This, I say, might be taken for granted, whilst it was not attended to, that the object of every particular affection is equally somewhat external to ourselves : and whether it be the good of another person, or whether it be any other external thing, makes no alteration with regard to its being one's own affection, and the gratification of it one's own private enjoyment. And so far as it is taken for granted, that barely having the means and materials of enjoyment is what constitutes interest and happiness ; that our interest and good consists in possessions themselves, in having the property of riches, houses,

lands, gardens, not in the enjoyment of them; so far it will even more strongly be taken for granted, in the way already explained, that an affection's conducing to the good of another, must even necessarily occasion it to conduce less to private good, if not to be positively detrimental to it. For, if property and happiness are one and the same thing, as by increasing the property of another, you lessen your own property, so by promoting the happiness of another, you must lessen your own happiness.

[128] But whatever occasioned the mistake, I hope it has been fully proved to be one; as it has been proved, that there is no peculiar rivalry or competition between self-love and benevolence; that as there may be a competition between these two, so there may also between any particular affection whatever and self-love; that every particular affection, benevolence among the rest, is subservient to self-love, by being the instrument of private enjoyment; and that in one respect benevolence contributes more to private interest, *i.e.* enjoyment or satisfaction, than any other of the particular common affections, as it is in a degree its own gratification.

[129] And to all these things may be added, that religion, from whence arises our strongest obligation to benevolence, is so far

from disowning the principle of self-love, that it often addresses itself to that very principle, and always to the mind in that state when reason presides; and there can no access be had to the understanding, but by convincing men, that the course of life we would persuade them to is not contrary to their interest. It may be allowed, without any prejudice to the cause of virtue and religion, that our ideas of happiness and misery are, of all our ideas, the nearest and most important to us; that they will, nay, if you please, that they ought to prevail over those of order, and beauty, and harmony, and proportion, if there should ever be, as it is impossible there ever should be, any inconsistency between them; though these last, too, as expressing the fitness of actions, are real as truth itself. Let it be allowed, though virtue or moral rectitude does indeed consist in affection to and pursuit of what is right and good, as such: yet that, when we sit down in a cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit, till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it.

[130] Common reason and humanity will have some influence upon mankind, whatever becomes of speculations: but, so far as the interests of virtue depend upon the theory of it being secured from open scorn, so far its

very being in the world depends upon its appearing to have no contrariety to private interest and self-love. The foregoing observations, therefore, it is hoped, may have gained a little ground in favour of the precept before us, the particular explanation of which shall be the subject of the next discourse.

[131] I will conclude, at present, with observing the peculiar obligation which we are under to virtue and religion, as enforced in the verses following the text, in the epistle for the day, from our Saviour's coming into the world. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us, therefore, cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light," &c. The meaning and force of which exhortation is, that Christianity lays us under new obligations to a good life, as by it the will of God is more clearly revealed, and as it affords additional motives to the practice of it, over and above those which arise out of the nature of virtue and vice; I might add, as our Saviour has set us a perfect example of goodness in our own nature. Now, love and charity is plainly the thing in which he had placed his religion; in which, therefore, as we have any pretence to the name of Christians, we must place ours. He hath at once enjoined it upon us by way of command, with peculiar force: and by his example, as having undertaken the

work of our salvation, out of pure love and good-will to mankind. The endeavour to set home this example upon our minds is a very proper employment of this season*, which is bringing on the festival of his birth ; which, as it may teach us many excellent lessons of humility, resignation, and obedience to the will of God ; so there is none it recommends with greater authority, force, and advantage, than this of love and charity ; since it was “for us men, and for our salvation, that he came down from heaven, and was incarnate, and was made man ;” that he might teach us our duty, and more especially that he might enforce the practice of it, reform mankind, and finally bring us to that “eternal salvation, of which he is the Author to all those that obey him.”

* [This Sermon was preached on Advent Sunday.]

VI.

[OF THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR, AS INCLUDING ALL OTHER VIRTUES*.]

ROMANS XIII. 9.


And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

[132] **H**AVING already removed the prejudices against public spirit, or the love of our neighbour, on the side of private interest and self-love; I proceed to the particular explanation of the precept before us, by showing *who is our neighbour: in what sense we are required to love him as ourselves: the influence such love would have upon our behaviour in life.* And lastly, *How this commandment comprehends in it all others.*

[133] I. The objects and due extent of this affection will be understood by attending to the nature of it, and to the nature and circumstances of mankind in this world. The love of our neighbour is the same with charity, benevolence, or good-will. It is an affection to the good and happiness of our fellow-crea-

tures. This implies in it a disposition to produce happiness : and this is the simple notion of goodness, which appears so amiable wherever we meet with it. From hence it is easy to see, that the perfection of goodness consists in love to the whole universe. This is the perfection of Almighty God.

[134] But as man is so much limited in his capacity, as so small a part of the creation comes under his notice and influence, and as we are not used to consider things in so general a way ; it is not to be thought of, that the universe should be the object of benevolence to such creatures as we are. Thus, in that precept of our Saviour's, " Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," Matt. v. 48, the perfection of the Divine goodness is proposed to our imitation, as it is promiscuous, and extends to the evil as well as the good ; not as it is absolutely universal, imitation of it in this respect being plainly beyond us. The object is too vast. For this reason, moral writers also have substituted a less general object for our benevolence—mankind. But this likewise is an object too general, and very much out of our view. Therefore persons more practical have, instead of mankind, put our country ; and made the principle of virtue, of human virtue, to consist in the entire uniform love for our country ;



and this is what we call a public spirit, which in men of public stations is the character of a patriot. But this is speaking to the upper part of the world. Kingdoms and governments are large; and the sphere of action of far the greatest part of mankind is much narrower than the governments they live under: or, however, common men do not consider their actions as affecting the whole community, of which they are members. There plainly is wanting a less general and nearer object of benevolence for the bulk of men than that of their country. Therefore the Scripture, not being a book of theory and speculation, but a plain rule of life for mankind, has, with the utmost possible propriety, put the principle of virtue upon the love of our neighbour; which is that part of the universe, that part of mankind, that part of our country, which comes under our immediate notice, acquaintance, and influence, and with which we have to do.

This is plainly the true account or reason why our Saviour places the principle of virtue in the love of our neighbour; and the account itself shows who are comprehended under that relation.

[135] II. Let us now consider in what sense we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves.

This precept, in its first delivery by our Saviour, is thus introduced: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself." These very different manners of expression do not lead our thoughts to the same measure or degree of love common to both objects; but to one peculiar to each. Supposing, then, which is to be supposed, a distinct meaning and propriety in the words, "as thyself;" the precept we are considering will admit of any of these senses; that we bear the same kind of affection to our neighbour as we do to ourselves; or, that the love we bear to our neighbour should have some certain proportion or other to self-love; or, lastly, that it should bear the particular proportion of equality, that it be in the same degree.

[136] *First*, The precept may be understood as requiring only that we have the same kind of affection to our fellow-creatures as to ourselves. That, as every man has the principle of self-love, which disposes him to avoid misery, and consult his own happiness; so we should cultivate the affection of good-will to our neighbour, and that it should influence us to have the same kind of regard to him. This, at least, must be commanded; and this will not only prevent our being injurious to

him, but will also put us upon promoting his good. There are blessings in life, which we share in common with others; peace, plenty, freedom, healthful seasons. But real benevolence to our fellow-creatures would give us the notion of a common interest in a stricter sense: for in the degree we love another, his interest, his joys, and sorrows, are our own. It is from self-love that we form the notion of private good, and consider it as our own: love of our neighbour will teach us thus to appropriate to ourselves his good and welfare; to consider ourselves as having a real share in his happiness. Thus the principle of benevolence would be an advocate within our own breasts, to take care of the interests of our fellow-creatures, in all the interferences and competitions which cannot but be, from the imperfections of our nature, and the state we are in. It would likewise, in some measure, lessen that interfering, and hinder men from forming so strong a notion of private good, exclusive of the good of others, as we commonly do. Thus, as the private affection makes us in a peculiar manner sensible of humanity, justice, or injustice, when exercised towards ourselves; love of our neighbour would give us the same kind of sensibility in his behalf. This would be the greater security of our uniform obedience to that most equitable rule, "Whatsoever ye

would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

[137] All this is indeed no more than that we should have a real love to our neighbour; but then, which is to be observed, the words, *as thyself*, express this in the most distinct manner, and determine the precept to relate to the affection itself. The advantage which this principle of benevolence has over other remote considerations is, that it is itself the temper of virtue; and likewise that it is the chief, nay, the only effectual security of our performing the several offices of kindness we owe to our fellow-creatures. When, from distant considerations, men resolve upon anything to which they have no liking, or, perhaps, an averseness, they are perpetually finding out evasions and excuses; which need never be wanting, if people look for them; and they equivocate with themselves in the plainest cases in the world. This may be in respect to single determinate acts of virtue: but it comes in much more, where the obligation is to a general course of behaviour: and most of all, if it be such as cannot be reduced to fixed determinate rules. This observation may account for the diversity of the expression in that known passage of the prophet Micah, "To do justly, and to love mercy." A man's heart must be formed to

humanity and benevolence, he must love mercy, otherwise he will not act mercifully in any settled course of behaviour. A consideration of the future sanctions of religion is our only security of persevering in our duty, in cases of great temptations; so to get our heart and temper formed to a love and liking of what is good, is absolutely necessary in order to our behaving rightly in the familiar and daily intercourses amongst mankind.

[138] *Secondly*, The precept before us may be understood to require, that we love our neighbour in some certain proportion or other, according as we love ourselves. And indeed a man's character cannot be determined by the love he bears to his neighbour, considered absolutely: but the proportion which this bears to self-love, whether it be attended to or not, is the chief thing which forms the character and influences the actions. For as the form of the body is a composition of various parts; so likewise our inward structure is not simple or uniform, but a composition of various passions, appetites, affections, together with rationality; including in this last both the discernment of what is right, and a disposition to regulate ourselves by it. There is greater variety of parts in what we call a *character*, than there are features in a face: and the morality of that is no more

determined by one part, than the beauty or deformity of this is by one single feature: each is to be judged of by all the parts or features not taken singly, but together. In the inward frame the various passions, appetites, affections, stand in different respects to each other. The principles in our mind may be contradictory, or checks and allays only, or incentives and assistants to each other. And principles, which in their nature have no kind of contrariety or affinity, may yet accidentally be each other's allays or incentives.

[139] From hence it comes to pass, that though we were able to look into the inward contexture of the heart, and see with the greatest exactness in what degree any one principle is in a particular man; we could not from thence determine how far that principle would go towards forming the character, or what influence it would have upon the actions, unless we could likewise discern what other principles prevailed in him, and see the proportion which that one bears to the others. Thus, though two men should have the affection of compassion in the same degree exactly, yet one may have the principle of resentment, or of ambition, so strong in him as to prevail over that of compassion, and prevent its having any influence upon his actions; so that he may deserve the character

of a hard or cruel man: whereas the other, having compassion in just the same degree only, yet having resentment or ambition in a lower degree, his compassion may prevail over them, so as to influence his actions, and to denominate his temper compassionate. So that, how strange soever it may appear to people who do not attend to the thing, yet it is quite manifest, that when we say one man is more resenting or compassionate than another, this does not necessarily imply that one has the principle of resentment or of compassion stronger than the other. For if the proportion, which resentment or compassion bears to other inward principles, is greater in one than in the other; this is itself sufficient to denominate one more resenting or compassionate than the other.

[140] Further, the whole system, as I may speak, of affections (including rationality) which constitute *the heart*, as this word is used in Scripture and on moral subjects, are each and all of them stronger in some than in others. Now the proportion which the two general affections, benevolence and self-love, bear to each other, according to this interpretation of the text, denominates men's character as to virtue. Suppose, then, one man to have the principle of benevolence in a higher degree than another; it will not follow

from hence that his general temper, or character, or actions, will be more benevolent than the other's. For he may have self-love in such a degree as quite to prevail over benevolence; so that it may have no influence at all upon his actions: whereas benevolence in the other person, though in a lower degree, may yet be the strongest principle in his heart; and strong enough to be the guide of his actions, so as to denominate him a good and virtuous man. The case is here as in scales: it is not one weight considered in itself, which determines whether the scale shall ascend or descend; but this depends upon the proportion which that one weight hath to the other.

[141] It being thus manifest, that the influence which benevolence has upon our actions, and how far it goes towards forming our character, is not determined by the degree itself of this principle in our mind, but by the proportion it has to self-love and other principles; a comparison also being made in the text between self-love and the love of our neighbour: these joint considerations afforded sufficient occasion for treating here of that proportion: it plainly is implied in the precept, though it should be questioned whether it be the exact meaning of the words "as thyself."

[142] Love of our neighbour, then, must bear some proportion to self-love: and virtue,

to be sure, consists in the due proportion. What this due proportion is, whether as a principle in the mind, or as exerted in actions, can be judged of only from our nature and condition in this world. Of the degree in which affections and the principles of action, considered in themselves, prevail, we have no measure : let us then proceed to the course of behaviour, the actions they produce.

[143] Both our nature and condition require that each particular man should make particular provision for himself; and the inquiry, what proportion benevolence should have to self-love, when brought down to practice, will be what is a competent care and provision for ourselves? And how certain soever it be, that each man must determine this for himself; and how ridiculous soever it would be, for any to attempt to determine it for another; yet it is to be observed that the proportion is real, and that a competent provision has a bound, and that it cannot be all which we can possibly get and keep within our grasp, without legal injustice. Mankind almost universally bring in vanity, supplies for what is called a life of pleasure, covetousness, or imaginary notions of superiority over others, to determine this question : but every one who desires to act a proper part in society, would do well to consider how far any of them come in to deter-

mine it, in the way of moral consideration. All that can be said is, supposing what, as the world goes, is so much to be supposed that it is scarce to be mentioned, that persons do not neglect what they really owe to themselves; the more of their care and thought, and of their fortune, they employ in doing good to their fellow-creatures, the nearer they come up to the law of perfection, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

[144] *Thirdly*, If the words, "as thyself," were to be understood of an equality of affection, it would not be attended with those consequences, which perhaps may be thought to follow from it. Suppose a person to have the same settled regard to others as to himself; that in every deliberate scheme or pursuit he took their interest into the account in the same degree as his own, so far as an equality of affection would produce this; yet he would, in fact, and ought to be, much more taken up and employed about himself, and his own concerns, than about others and their interests. For, besides the one common affection towards himself and his neighbour, he would have several other particular affections, passions, appetites, which he could not possibly feel in common both for himself and others: now these sensations themselves very much employ us, and have perhaps as great influence as self-

love. So far indeed as self-love and cool reflection upon what is for our interest, would set us on work to gain a supply of our own several wants; so far the love of our neighbour would make us do the same for him: but the degree in which we are put upon seeking and making use of the means of gratification, by the feeling of those affections, appetites, and passions, must necessarily be peculiar to ourselves.

[145] That there are particular passions, (suppose shame, resentment,) which men seem to have, and feel in common both for themselves and others, makes no alteration in respect to those passions and appetites which cannot possibly be thus felt in common. From hence (and perhaps more things of the like kind might be mentioned) it follows, that though there were an equality of affection to both, yet regard to ourselves would be more prevalent than attention to the concerns of others.

[146] And from moral considerations it ought to be so, supposing still the equality of affection commanded: because we are in a peculiar manner, as I may speak, intrusted with ourselves; and, therefore, care of our own interest, as well as of our conduct, particularly belongs to us.

[147] To these things must be added,

that moral obligations can extend no further than to natural possibilities. Now, we have a perception of our own interests, like consciousness of our own existence, which we always carry about with us; and which, in its continuation, kind, and degree, seems impossible to be felt in respect to the interests of others.

[148] From all these things it fully appears, that though we were to love our neighbour in the same degree as we love ourselves, so far as this is possible; yet the care of ourselves, of the individual, would not be neglected; the apprehended danger of which seems to be the only objection against understanding the precept in this strict sense.

[149] III. The general temper of mind which the due love of our neighbour would form us to, and the influence it would have upon our behaviour in life, is now to be considered.

The temper and behaviour of charity is explained at large, in that known passage of St. Paul: "Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things," 1 Cor. xiii. As to the meaning of the expressions, "seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, believeth all things:" however

those expressions may be explained away, this meekness, and, in some degree, easiness of temper, readiness to forego our right for the sake of peace, as well as in the way of compassion, freedom from mistrust, and disposition to believe well of our neighbour ; this general temper, I say, accompanies, and is plainly the effect of love and good-will. And though such is the world in which we live, that experience and knowledge of it not only may, but must beget in us greater regard to ourselves, and doubtfulness of the characters of others, than is natural to mankind, yet these ought not to be carried further than the nature and course of things make necessary. It is still true, even in the present sate of things, bad as it is, that a real good man had rather be deceived, than be suspicious ; had rather forego his known right, than run the venture of doing even a hard thing. This is the general temper of that charity, of which the Apostle asserts, that if he had it not, giving his " body to be burned would avail him nothing ;" and and which, he says, " shall never fail."

[150] The happy influence of this temper extends to every different relation and circumstance in human life. It plainly renders a man better, more to be desired, as to all the respects and relations we can stand in to each other. The benevolent man is disposed to

make use of all external advantages in such a manner as shall contribute to the good of others, as well as to his own satisfaction. His own satisfaction consists in this. He will be easy and kind to his dependents, compassionate to the poor and distressed, friendly to all with whom he has to do. This includes the good neighbour, parent, master, magistrate : and such a behaviour would plainly make dependence, inferiority, and even servitude, easy. So that a good or charitable man, of superior rank in wisdom, fortune, authority, is a common blessing to the place he lives in : happiness grows under his influence. This good principle in inferiors would discover itself in paying respect, gratitude, obedience, as due. It were, therefore, methinks, one just way of trying one's own character, to ask ourselves, Am I in reality a better master or servant, a better friend, a better neighbour, than such and such persons ; whom, perhaps, I may think not to deserve the character of virtue and religion, so much as myself ?

[151] And as to the spirit of party, which unhappily prevails amongst mankind, whatever are the distinctions which serve for a supply to it, some or other of which have obtained in all ages and countries ; one who is thus friendly to his kind will immediately make due allowances for it, as what cannot but be amongst

such creatures as men, in such a world as this. And as wrath and fury and overbearing upon these occasions proceed, as I may speak, from men's feeling only on their own side; so a common feeling, for others as well as for ourselves, would render us sensible to this truth, which it is strange can have so little influence; that we ourselves differ from others, just as much as they do from us. I put the matter in this way, because it can scarce be expected that the generality of men should see, that those things which are made the occasions of dissension and fomenting the party-spirit, are really nothing at all: but it may be expected from all people, how much soever they are in earnest about their respective peculiarities, that humanity and common good-will to their fellow-creatures should moderate and restrain that wretched spirit.

[152] This good temper of charity likewise would prevent strife and enmity arising from other occasions: it would prevent our giving just cause of offence, and our taking it without cause. And in cases of real injury, a good man will make all the allowances which are to be made: and, without any attempts of retaliation, he will only consult his own and other men's security for the future, against injustice and wrong.

[153] IV. I proceed to consider, lastly,



what is affirmed of the precept now explained, that it comprehends in it all others; *i. e.* that to love our neighbour as ourselves includes in it all virtues.

Now, the way in which every maxim of conduct, or general speculative assertion, when it is to be explained at large, should be treated, is, to show what are the particular truths which were designed to be comprehended under such a general observation, how far it is strictly true; and then the limitations, restrictions, and exceptions, if there be exceptions, with which it is to be understood. But it is only the former of these, namely, how far the assertion in the text holds, and the ground of pre-eminence assigned to the precept of it, which in strictness comes into our present consideration.

[154] However, in almost everything that is said, there is somewhat to be understood beyond what is explicitly laid down, and which we of course supply; somewhat, I mean, which would not be commonly called a restriction or limitation. Thus, when benevolence is said to be the sum of virtue, it is not spoken of as a blind propension, but as a principle in reasonable creatures, and so to be directed by their reason: for reason and reflection come into our notion of a moral agent. And that will lead us to consider distant consequences, as well as the immediate tendency of an action;

it will teach us, that the care of some persons, suppose children and families, is particularly committed to our charge by nature and Providence; as also, that there are other circumstances, suppose friendship or former obligations, which require that we do good to some, preferably to others. Reason, considered merely as subservient to benevolence, as assisting to produce the greatest good, will teach us to have particular regard to these relations and circumstances; because it is plainly for the good of the world that they should be regarded. And as there are numberless cases, in which, notwithstanding appearances, we are not competent judges, whether a particular action will upon the whole do good or harm; reason in the same way will teach us to be cautious how we act in these cases of uncertainty. It will suggest to our consideration, which is the safer side; how liable we are to be led wrong by passion and private interest; and what regard is due to laws, and the judgment of mankind. All these things must come into consideration, were it only in order to determine which way of acting is likely to produce the greatest good. Thus, upon supposition that it were in the strictest sense true, without limitation, that benevolence includes in all virtues; yet reason must come in as its guide and director, in order to attain

its own end, the end of benevolence, the greatest public good. Reason, then, being thus included, let us now consider the truth of the assertion itself.

[155] *First*, It is manifest that nothing can be of consequence to mankind or any creature, but happiness. * This then is all which any person can, in strictness of speaking, be said to have a right to. We can, therefore, owe no man anything, but only to further and promote his happiness, according to our abilities. And, therefore, a disposition and endeavour to do good to all with whom we have to do, in the degree and manner which the different relations we stand in to them require, is a discharge of all the obligations we are under to them.

[156] As human nature is not one simple uniform thing, but a composition of various parts, body, spirit, appetites, particular passions, and affections; for each of which reasonable self-love would lead men to have due regard, and make suitable provision: so society consists of various parts, to which we stand in different respects and relations; and just benevolence would as surely lead us to have due regard to each of these, and behave as the respective relations require. Reasonable goodwill, and right behaviour towards our fellow-

[* But see the Note to Art. 158.]

creatures, are in a manner the same : only that the former expresseth the principle as it is in the mind; the latter, the principle as it were become external, *i.e.* exerted in actions.

[157] And so far as temperance, sobriety, and moderation in sensual pleasures, and the contrary vices, have any respect to our fellow-creatures, any influences upon their quiet welfare, and happiness; as they always have a real, and often a near influence upon it; so far it is manifest those virtues may be produced by the love of our neighbour, and that the contrary vices would be prevented by it. Indeed, if men's regard to themselves will not restrain them from excess, it may be thought little probable that their love to others will be sufficient: but the reason is, that their love to others is not, any more than the regard to themselves, just, and in its due degree. There are, however, manifest instances of persons kept sober and temperate from regard to their affairs, and the welfare of those who depend upon them. And it is obvious to every one, that habitual excess, a dissolute course of life, implies a general neglect of the duties we owe towards our friends, our families, and our country.

[158] From hence it is manifest, that the common virtues, and the common vices of mankind, may be traced up to benevolence,

or the want of it. And this entitles the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," to the pre-eminence given to it; and is a justification of the Apostle's assertion, that all other commandments are comprehended in it; whatever cautions and restrictions* there

* (a) For instance: as we are not competent judges what is, upon the whole, for the good of the world, there may be other immediate ends appointed us to pursue, besides that one of doing good, or producing happiness. Though the good of the creation be the only end of the Author of it, yet he may have laid us under particular obligations, which we may discern and feel ourselves under, quite distinct from a perception that the observance or violation of them is for the happiness or misery of our fellow-creatures. And this is, in fact, the case.

(b) For there are certain dispositions of mind, and certain actions, which are in themselves approved or disapproved by mankind, abstracted from the consideration of their tendency to the happiness or misery of the world; approved or disapproved by reflection, by that principle within, which is the guide of life, the judge of right and wrong. Numberless instances of this kind might be mentioned. There are pieces of treachery, which in themselves appear base and detestable to every one. There are actions which, perhaps, can scarce have any other general name given them than indecencies, which yet are odious and shocking to human nature. There is such a thing as meanness, a little mind, which as it is quite distinct from incapacity, so it raises a dislike and disapprobation quite different from that contempt which men are too apt to have of mere folly.

(c) On the other hand, what we call greatness of mind is the object of another sort of approbation than superior understanding. Fidelity, honour, strict justice, are themselves approved in the highest degree, abstracted from the consideration of their tendency.

(d) Now, whether it be thought that each of these are connected with benevolence in our nature, and so may be considered as the same thing with it; or whether some of

are, which might require to be considered, if we were to state particularly and at length, what is virtue and right behaviour in mankind. But,

[159] *Secondly*, It might be added, that in a higher and more general way of consideration, leaving out the particular nature of creatures, and the particular circumstances in which they are placed, benevolence seems in the strictest sense to include in it all that is good and worthy; all that is good, which we have any distinct particular notion of. We have no clear conception of any positive moral attribute in the Supreme Being, but what may be resolved up into goodness. And if we consider a reasonable creature, or moral agent, without regard to the particular relations and circumstances in which he is placed, we cannot conceive anything else to come in towards determining whether he is to be ranked in a higher or lower class of virtuous beings, but the higher or lower degree in which that principle, and what is manifestly connected with it, prevail in him.

them be thought an inferior kind of virtues and vices, somewhat like natural beauties and deformities; or, lastly, plain exceptions to the general rule; thus much, however, is certain, that the things now instanced in, and numberless others, are approved or disapproved by mankind in general, in quite another view than as conducive to the happiness or misery of the world.

[160] That which we more strictly call piety, or the love of God, and which is an essential part of a right temper, some may perhaps imagine no way connected with benevolence; yet, surely, they must be connected, if there be indeed in being an object infinitely good. Human nature is so constituted, that every good affection implies the love of itself; *i. e.* becomes the object of a new affection in the same person. Thus, to be righteous, implies in it the love of righteousness; to be benevolent, the love of benevolence; to be good, the love of goodness; whether this righteousness, benevolence, or goodness, be viewed as in our own mind, or in another's: and the love of God, as a Being perfectly good, is the love of perfect goodness, contemplated in a being or person. Thus morality and religion, virtue and piety, will at last necessarily coincide, run up into one and the same point, and love will be in all senses *the end of the commandment.*

O Almighty God, inspire us with this divine principle; kill in us all the seeds of envy and ill-will; and help us, by cultivating within ourselves the love of our neighbour, to improve in the love of Thee. Thou hast

placed us in various kindreds, friendships, and relations, as the school of discipline for our affections : help us, by the due exercise of them, to improve to perfection, till all partial affection be lost in that entire, universal one, and thou, O God, shalt be all in all !

THE END.

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